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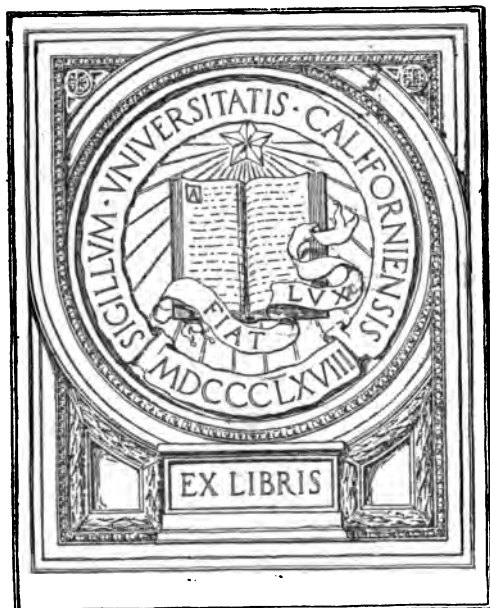
# CHEMICAL BANK



1823 ~ 1913

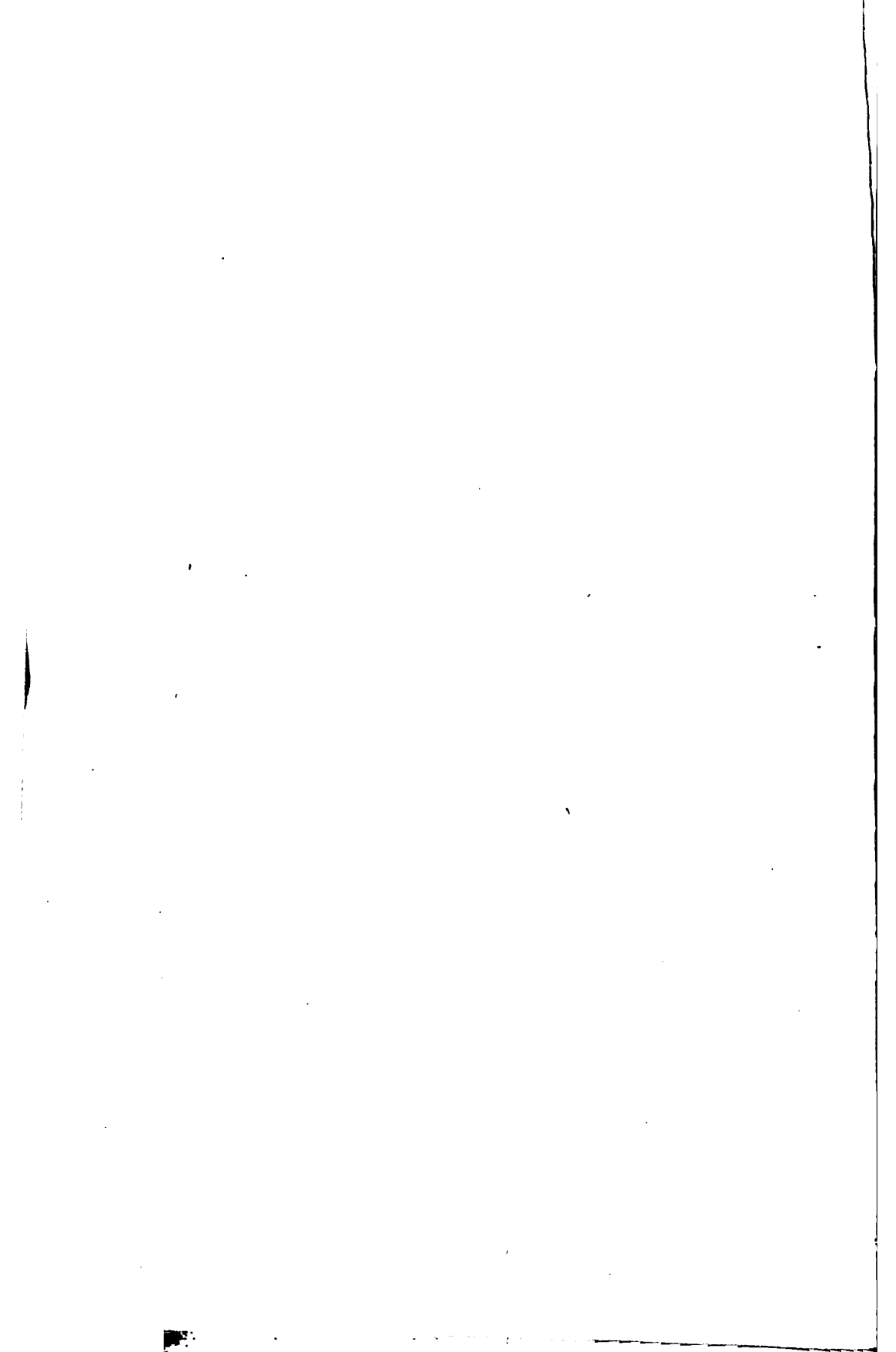
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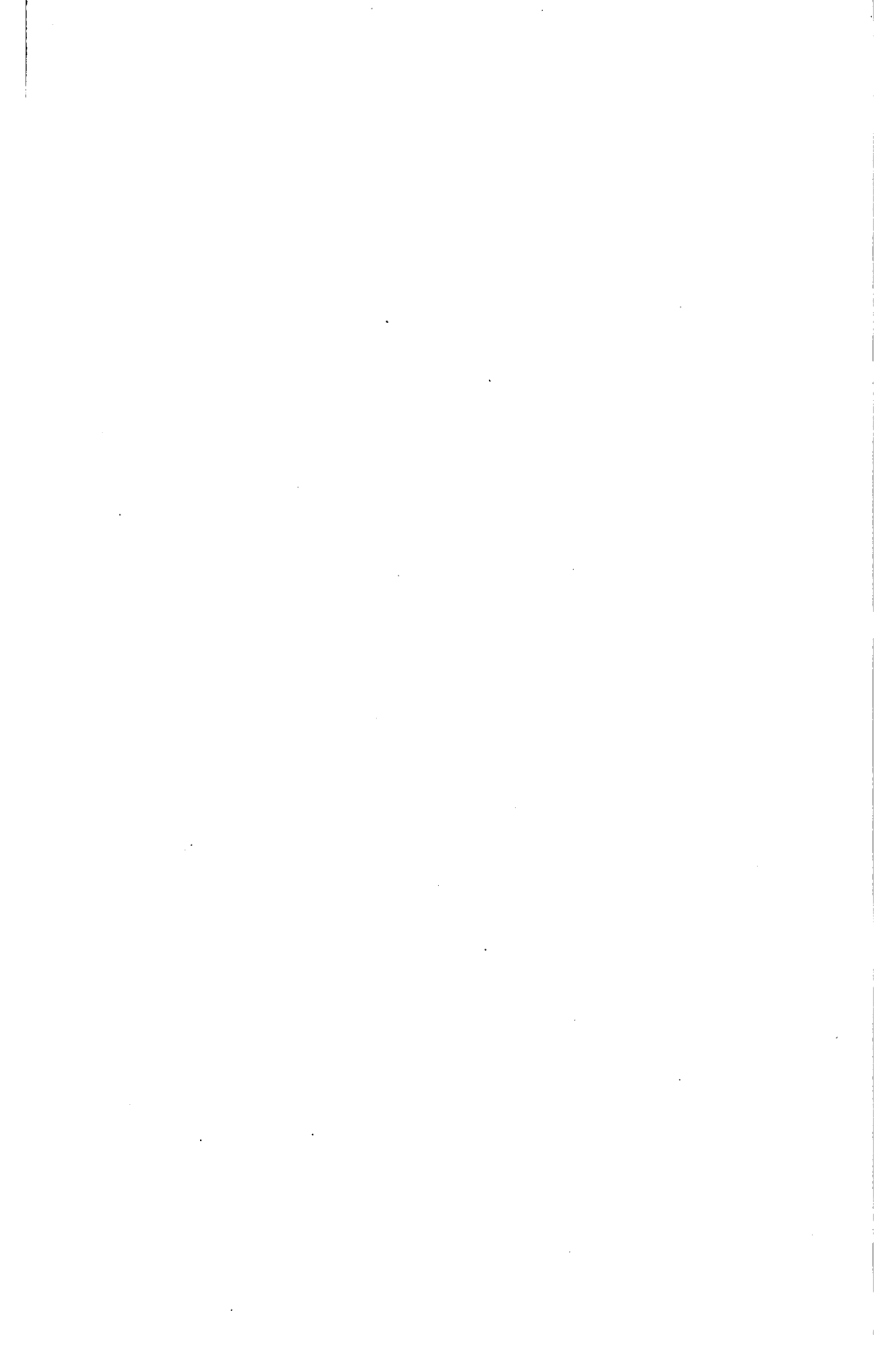


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## **HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK**





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CITY HALL PARK — 1842

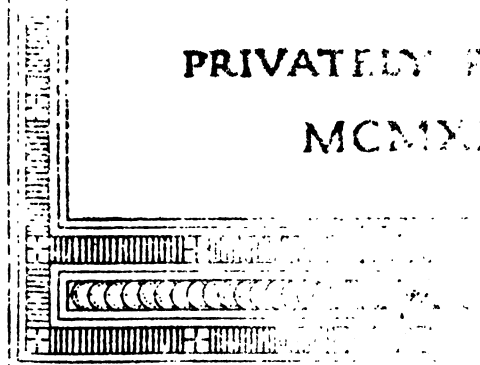
# HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

1823-1913



PRIVATELY PRINTED

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CITY HALL PARK -- 1842

chemical national bank, New York.

# HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

1823-1913



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THE CHEMICAL NATIONAL BANK

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TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

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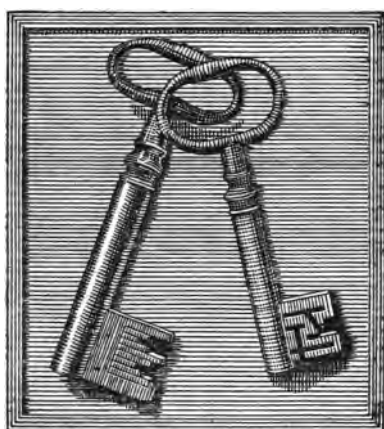
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## INTRODUCTORY

Not only to those who turn the wheels of finance, but to all students of American business and growth, the words "Chemical Bank" call to mind a contrast both curious and instructive.

Compare the associations the name brings to us to-day with the very different impressions of the worthy New York newspaper readers who came across this item in *The Gazette* and other dailies of July 30, 1824:

The New York Chemical Manufacturing Company will open their office of Discount and Deposit at No. 216 Broadway, opposite St. Paul's Church, on Monday, the 2nd of August. The Bank will be open daily (Sundays and holidays excepted) from 9 o'clock A. M. until 3 o'clock P. M. The Board of Directors will meet on Wednesdays and Saturdays and a Committee will attend daily for making discounts.

By order of the Board of Directors.

WILLIAM STEBBINS, Cashier.

A bank on Broadway! There was much shaking of heads among the men of "Wall Street," then as now the central region of American finance. Nine of the twelve existing banks did business in Wall Street, the rest near by. It was felt that the



## HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL NATIONAL BANK

Chemical was going too far uptown. Why, it was opposite "The Park" (as the City Hall grounds were then known). And only six blocks above, at Worth Street, came the lawns of the New York City Hospital, where, as every well-informed business man was aware, Broadway for all practical purposes ended.

So much for the limitations of human foresight. To-day, everybody knows that there are sixty-five banking houses on Broadway, that the northernmost of them is eight miles above the City Hall, and that the stock of the Chemical, ever since 1895, when it sold at \$4,900 a share, has held the record as the highest priced stock of any large financial institution in the world.

As for the general public, they felt toward the Chemical in 1824 the opposition to any and all banks common at that time. This prejudice was of a piece with the popular hostility at many times and places to any radically new form of labor-saving machinery, and that, of course, is all a bank is or ought to be

On the following page is quoted an extract to show that the Chemical Bank, even in its earliest days, and on the comparatively insignificant scale of those times, was of service to the community in precisely the fields which at present identify it — the furthering not of speculation but of commerce; the furnishing of assistance, not to the promoter and the so-called "financier," but to the individual merchant and business man:

## INTRODUCTORY

He (John Mason) understood that mechanics needed money as much when it was scarce as when it was plenty. Often have I known him to discount, as president of the Chemical Bank, for merchants in distress, at 7 per cent., when he deemed it almost certain that he would be obliged to use his own private securities to raise money to sustain his bank.

Rich as Mr. Mason was, his heart was bigger than his purse. There was no pleasure in him greater than to have a respectable mechanic come to him at a late hour who had fifty men to pay and knew not where to raise the money, which was worth, perhaps, 2 per cent. a month. Mr. Mason delighted to take such a man by the hand and would kindly say, "My good man, you must have the money," and give it to him at the legal rate.—*From New York Evening Post of 1859.*

It whets the appetite of a lover of American history to come across such reminiscences of public servants, men who gave to a profession more than they got out of it. There is much personal detail of this inspiring sort in Part II of this volume — "Men of the Chemical Bank" — and it is of great interest to others than students of New York genealogy.

There are broader aspects, however, of even wider interest, in which the Bank appears, not as a personal possession or a local enterprise, but as an American institution. With such of its principles and its methods as belong to the nation, Part I — "The Chemical Bank and Events in American History" — is concerned.







HIS HONOR WILLIAM PAULDING

## CHAPTER I

### BROADWAY AND ITS BANKERS NINETY YEARS AGO

When the first Cornelius Vanderbilt was commodore of "the elegant new steamboat *Thistle*"; when the first John Jacob Astor resided in one of the fine New York City homes where to-day stands the ancient Astor House; when the Mayor of the city was His Honor William Paulding, nephew to that John Paulding who, with two other patriotic militiamen, had captured the ill-fated André only forty-four years before; when a foreign visitor to New York City, walking to the post-office one evening, found the street lamps unlighted "because the moon is in the first quarter and expected to shine"; when the trip from New York to Philadelphia, by steamboat and stage, had been so expedited that one could accomplish it in a single day; when the foreign mail sometimes arrived only six weeks after its dispatch from London; when daring real estate speculators prophesied that Broadway would some day be built up as far as Tenth Street—in the year 1824, when the nation, its great men and institutions, were still young, there appeared, on April 15th, the following

4 HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

small notice in the New York *Commercial Advertiser*:

You will find the Legislature have at last given you another batch of banks. The Chemical and the Fulton Bank bills and the Long Island Bank bill received their final passage in the Senate on Thursday. The following was the state of the vote — Fulton, 23 to 8; Chemical, 22 to 8; Long Island, 26 to 4.

Some bitterness is perceptible in this dispatch from the newspaper's Albany correspondent. Indeed, it was by no means a mere formality to get a charter out of the New York (or any other) Legislature in 1824. People were as suspicious of banks then as they are of the so-called "trusts" now. The bank was held to be a cold, "soulless" machine, thrusting itself between debtor and creditor, to the extinguishment of the former pleasant personal relations.

There were no banks at all in the Colonies until the last quarter of the eighteenth century brought sudden growth to the flour exporters and ship-builders around Philadelphia.

The first bank in New York City had taken seven years to get its charter. In the interval it had done business without one. Even the brilliant, popular, and influential Aaron Burr had found himself, in order to get a bank charter, driven to take advantage of a yellow-fever scare. He rushed a bill through the Legislature provid-

ing for a water company, and not until later was it discovered that the bill contained a paragraph conferring banking privileges.

A prominent New York Senator, Cadwalader D. Colden, afterward Mayor of the city, went so far as to declare in Albany that, unless some stop were put to the progress of banking, he believed desolation would be spread over the country!

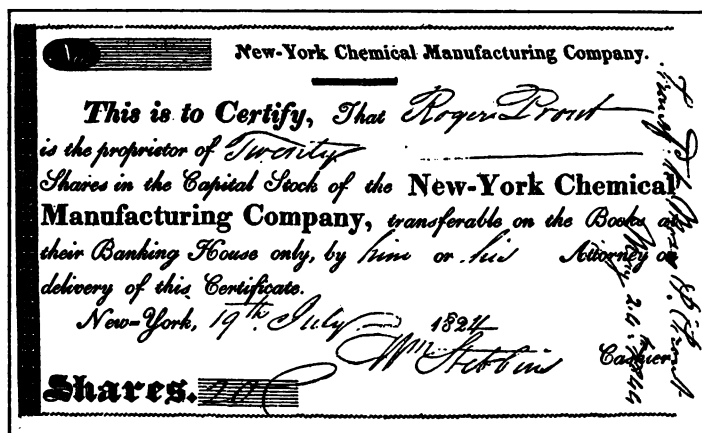
So the founders of the Chemical Bank had been at some trouble to insert their entering wedge. On February 24, 1823, they had obtained incorporation at Albany for twenty-one years, for "The New York Chemical Manufacturing Company." Its charter stipulated that the company "shall *not* engage in any banking business or transaction, excepting such as may be proper and necessary to carry into effect the declared objects of this act."

What would have been the reflections of the legislators who insisted on that prohibition if they could have foreseen that within the lifetime of their own grandchildren the Chemical Company as a banking institution would have had such a phenomenal growth as to become the safe and sure custodian of the stupendous sum of \$30,000,000 in deposits yearly?

Even after April 1st of the next year, when the old charter was amended so that the directors (seven) could do a general banking business "and purchase and hold real estate necessary for the transaction of its business," it was stipulated



that at least \$100,000 of the \$500,000 capital, in shares of \$25 each, must be employed in the manufacture of chemicals. Thus we find the



CERTIFICATE OF STOCK OF NEW YORK CHEMICAL MFG. CO.

chemical enterprise launched in the company's first business advertisement, in the daily papers of May 24th, which began as follows, above an extensive list of products:

Chemicals manufactured at the New York Chemical Manufactory, warranted superior in quality to those usually imported, are offered for sale in lots to suit purchasers.

The excellence of these products is attested by this contemporary report of the Medical Society of the State of New York:

"This Committee are happy to add by their testimony to the commendations bestowed by a similar committee at the last session of the society, and the Committee are ready to declare that the drugs are decidedly superior to similar articles imported from





BALTHAZAR P. MELICK

abroad; the Committee cannot close their remarks without suggesting how worthy such an establishment is of public patronage.

"D. R. BECK,  
"LAWRENCE HULL,  
"DAN'L AYRES."

It was not until 1832 that the trustees transferred their main energies from the manufacturing of drugs (first in Greenwich Village, then as far uptown as the present Thirty-fourth Street) to the work of exclusively establishing the credit and stability of their banking house on Broadway.

Even with the full banking charter of April 1, 1824, however, the managers of the Chemical found no easy path before them. Instead of a city of nearly five million people, there was a town with one hundred and twenty-four thousand, to serve which there were already in existence twelve other banks, as follows:

BANK	PLACE OF BUSINESS	INCORPORATED	CAPITAL
Bank of New York	32 Wall Street	1791	\$1,000,000
Manhattan Company	23 Wall Street	1799	2,000,000
Merchants' Bank	25 Wall Street	1805	1,490,000
Mechanics' Bank	16 Wall Street	1810	2,000,000
Union Bank	17 Wall Street	1811	1,000,000
Bank of America	30 Wall Street	1812	2,000,000
City Bank	38 Wall Street	1812	1,250,000
Phenix Bank	24 Wall Street	1812	500,000
Branch Bank of U. S.	15 Wall Street	1816	2,500,000
Franklin Bank	1 Franklin Square	1818	500,000
North River Bank	186 Greenwich Street	1821	500,000
Tradesmen's Bank	177 Chatham Street	1823	600,000

The first president of the Bank was Balthazar P. Melick. Thus ran the original paper signed

by him August 6, 1824, and attested by W. A. Seely, the Bank's notary and lawyer:

I, Balthazar P. Melick, do swear that I will, to the best of my knowledge and ability, in all things faithfully and truly execute and perform the duties assigned to and trust reposed in me as President of the New York Chemical Manufacturing Co.

"Baltus" P. Melick, as he was less ponderously known, was a prosperous wholesale grocer of old Greenwich Village. He was a man of influence, a director in the Equitable Fire Insurance Company, the Greenwich Insurance Company, and the Union Marine and Life Insurance Company. His name first appears in the city directory for 1795, where, as Baltus P. Melick, he is described as a grocer at 183 Washington Street.

That the president in his earlier years had not been above entering into the amusements of the community is shown by his prominence in the musical and social club known as the Black Friars Society. The following notice appeared in the daily papers of November 20, 1798:

Black Friars Society — A regular meeting of the Society will be held this evening at the Friary, where the attendance of the members is particularly requested on business of importance. By order of the Father. B. P. MELICK, Secretary.

The Chemical's first cashier, William Stebbins,





JOHN C. MORRISON

who had been teller of the North River Bank, where his brother John was cashier, resigned October 11, 1828, to accept the position of assistant cashier. The position of cashier was then held by Alanson Douglas up to 1830, when Archibald Craig, who had been connected with the Bank from its start and had been thoroughly trained in the methods which the directors favored, succeeded to the position.

It was in this year that John B. Desdoity, who was to become one of the Bank's most faithful servants, entered its employ as bookkeeper, and in 1831 B. P. Melick resigned the office of president.

LIST OF FIRST DIRECTORS, 1824

BALTHAZAR P. MELICK, President

JOHN C. MORRISON

MARK SPENCER

GERARDUS POST

JAMES JENKINS

WILLIAM A. SEELY, Notary Public

WILLIAM STEBBINS, Cashier of the Bank and agent of the Manufacturing Company.

Just what it means to say that the new institution attacked its problems with conservatism appears from the salaries it paid its officers and the house in which it did business, and for which it paid an annual rental of \$1,200.

Even five years later, while the Bank's stock was selling well above par and its business seemed well established, only two of its officers received more than \$1,000. The cashier received the



munificent sum of \$1,500, besides the upper room of the Bank for living quarters. This custom of sleeping above one's office was followed by many of the oldest and most prosperous New York merchants; and it was thought especially fitting for the cashier of a bank to do so, as he could thus personally, by night as well as by day, contribute to the safety of his institution.

As for the bank building—an unpretentious two-story dwelling house of red brick brought from Holland—it is an amusing illustration of conditions on Broadway in 1824 to read a “covenant” still in the Bank's possession, entered into with its next door neighbor, Nicholas Haight, one of a large family of prominent and respected merchants, who lived at 218 and paid a rental of \$560 per annum. He agrees in this covenant, for the sum of \$1.00, to allow the bank officers “peaceable and quiet use of an alley intervening between the two houses, which, for greater convenience, has been converted into a private hall.” This agreement remained in force until the Bank moved, twenty-six years later.

One step up from the Broadway sidewalk brought one into the counting office. Behind this was the directors' room, where, for twenty-six years, some of the keenest and strongest financial minds the metropolis has ever known met and consulted. Yet to our eyes the room must have shown a curious lack of the imposing magnificence that we associate with modern banking



216 BROADWAY, FROM STEEPLE OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH



BARNUM'S MUSEUM AND GENIN'S HAT STORE



quarters. How it impressed a visitor in 1849 is told in a reminiscence of Jacob C. Parsons, who was about to enter the service of the Bank as receiving teller. He says:

The directors' room was in the rear, small and with a window on the side protected by iron bars, affording but a scant supply of light. In the middle stood a table, at the end of which, in a high back chair, sat Mr. Desdoity, the cashier, short and stout, of a florid complexion, with wide shirt collar and a silk handkerchief loosely tied around his neck, his wig disarranged, as he had probably been taking a nap. After we had exchanged a few remarks in relation to banking business and the position I had filled, he seemed to be satisfied and inquired how soon I could commence work. When I informed him I was going to be married, and had arranged to take a short trip, being an old bachelor, he gazed at me for a few moments with an expression of deep commiseration. When he recovered from the shock, he proposed, as they were hard pressed, that I take two or three days. My reply was: "I shall be married on the time appointed; the morning after I shall be here at 8:30." He laughed and said: "Well, you mean business."

I had yet to learn that the men who gathered daily in that back room for a consultation were devoting their time and energies to the building up on the foundation of public confidence one of the greatest financial institutions of the country.

From the very beginning the dingy "back room" furnished a meeting place for men with names

identified then and since with important movements in American commerce and history.

James Fenimore Cooper was one of the early stockholders. The Bank still treasures a power of attorney which he signed in 1835 authorizing Gorham A. Worth to receive all dividends on his stock.

Robert Lenox, active in the Chemical's founding and one of its largest stockholders, was a financial magnate of the time. He was one of the only two men in New York credited with fortunes of more than a million dollars, the other being John Jacob Astor.\*

Indeed, personal and daily intimacy with the Bank's affairs can be traced to many of its earliest advisers, stockholders, and depositors, among whom were:

BENJAMIN FIELD	PHILIP EMBURY
DAVID EMBURY	WM. LEWIS MORRIS
HENRY REMSEN	JAMES H. SUYDAM
JOHN RUTHERFORD	JOHN ANDERSON
CHANCELLOR JAMES KENT	THOMAS A. EMMETT (Master in Chancery)
JAMES W. BLEECKER	T. T. WOODRUFF
W. C. McCOUN	GIDEON TUCKER
DANIEL EMBURY	WILLIAM JAY
THOMAS C. CHEW	THOMAS W. THORNE
JAMES H. HACKETT	H. D. FIELD
NICHOLAS LUDLAM	JOS. W. HAMERSLEY
ALEXANDER HUTTON	JAPHET BISHOP
JOHN M. ASPINWALL	DOMINICK LYNCH
PHILLIPS PHOENIX	WM. R. GRACIE
THOMAS LIPPINCOTT	

\*From a pamphlet of 1842 prepared by Moses Y. Beach, the successful publisher of the *New York Sun* during its early days.

WILLIAM KENT	JOHN W. HAMERSLEY
ROBERT LENOX	DAVID HOSACK
DANIEL LORD	JOHN T. IRVING
JAMES DEPEYSTER	ISAAC KIP
WM. B. ASTOR	PETER W. LIVINGSTON
LEONARD BLEECKER	NATHANIEL PRIME
GEORGE BRUCE	PETER SCHERMERHORN
GIRARD BEEKMAN	WM. E. WILMERDING
HENRY I. CAMMANN	EDWARD WHITEHOUSE
DAVID DUDLEY FIELD	

Statement of the funds and property of the New  
York Chemical Manufacturing Company, Feb-  
ruary 2, 1829:

Chemical manufactory . . . . .	\$100,000 00
Bills receivable . . . . .	688,922 64
Banking house, plates, etc. . . . .	9,499 74
Due from banks, including their bills on hand . . . . .	103,877 27
Specie . . . . .	20,094 47
	<hr/>
	\$922,394 12
Capital stock . . . . .	\$500,000 00
Surplus fund . . . . .	4,074 68
Bills in circulation . . . . .	155,164 00
Due other banks . . . . .	50,463 21
Deposits including dividends unpaid . . . . .	212,692 23
	<hr/>
	\$922,394 12

## CHAPTER II

### JOHN MASON — THE BANK GUARANTY LAW

If credit can be given to any one man more than another for laying the unshaken foundations of the Chemical Bank, it is due to John Mason, who was elected president upon the retirement of Balthazar P. Melick. While not connected with the Bank's organization, he became a stockholder in 1826 and virtually controlled its destiny, as a director and as president, from 1831 until his death, September 29, 1839.

Although he had begun life as a worker for daily bread, he had for twenty years been acknowledged a leader of the "old New York merchant princes." At his death his estate was estimated at \$800,000, equaling in importance that of Alexander T. Stewart, and thus one of the half dozen greatest fortunes of the day.

John Mason's success in every enterprise which he took up made him eagerly sought as a director and stockholder in many companies. Nevertheless, he confined his interests to a few well-managed concerns. No merchant in the city was credited with shrewder insight or more correct judgment, yet the money accumulated by his sound methods was never displayed lavishly, whether it was his own or the stockholders'.



CHEMICAL BANK NOTES





Upon the conduct of the Chemical Bank President Mason firmly stamped his own methods, old fashioned and conservative in the extreme. Yet the sureness of his judgment made him willing to render financial assistance to those worthy of it, even in a tight money market. One day in 1836 the cashier had refused to discount the note of a well-known journalist. Hard times were approaching—indeed, the panic of 1837 was drawing near. As the disappointed applicant was passing out of the Broadway entrance he was accosted by a tall gentleman whom he did not know. This was John Mason, president of the Bank. “Good day!” exclaimed Mr. Mason. “I have long wished for the pleasure of encountering you. I have read your productions for years, and so has my family, and it is unnecessary for me to say how delighted we have been. I hope the world goes fairly with you, for I know of no one who more richly deserves to succeed in his undertaking. But what brings you to our Bank?”

“I have been an unsuccessful applicant for a discount,” was the reply.

“This should not be. Times are hard, to be sure, but they ought to try to accommodate you. Is the amount you require a large one, and do you wish to employ it in your business?”

“I do, sir.”

“Then you shall have it. If the Bank cannot accommodate you, I will do it out of my own private funds. Walk in.”

The visitor secured his money.

The insight displayed by John Mason, and the esteem in which the community held him, are apparent from his prominence in the founding of the New York and Harlem Railroad in 1831, and of the first savings bank in New York City thirteen years before.

Soon after President Mason assumed official charge of the Chemical his experience and responsibility were put to a severe test by the "safety fund" which the New York Legislature had put into operation on April 22, 1829, largely through the influence of Governor Martin Van Buren.

Remembering the part played by a similar plan in the national campaign of 1908, and in Oklahoma in 1909, it is additionally interesting to trace the workings of the Van Buren idea, whereby New York banks were mutually to insure against loss to their depositors. A guaranty fund was established, to which every newly chartered bank, or any other willing to join the fund, was required to make an annual contribution of one half of 1 per cent. of the bank's paid-up capital.

The money was to be cared for by the State Treasurer until it amounted to 3 per cent. of the capital of the bank, when it was to be applied to the payment of the debts of any insolvent bank.

As the following contemporary statement shows, most of the banks came within this law after it had been operating five years:

## LIST OF BANKS

In the State of New York subject to the Bank Fund law, in operation on the 1st of January, 1894

Banks	Capital employed	Bank notes in circulation	Due commissions of the canal fund	Loans and discounts	Specie	Directors' liabilities to the bank as principles	Directors' liabilities to the bank as sureties	Stock owned by directors
America . . . . .	\$2,001,200	379,866	112,500	4,126,202	369,496	99,900	336,400	153,500
Mechanics' . . . . .	2,000,000	719,830	.....	4,199,218	281,714	24,827	185,920	42,900
Merchants' . . . . .	1,490,000	618,528	.....	2,063,673	143,651	160,877	87,185	.....
New York . . . . .	1,000,000	630,313	.....	2,340,166	132,985	77,398	75,175	20,000
Union . . . . .	1,000,000	503,253	50,000	1,688,822	91,054	77,008	164,492	135,400
National . . . . .	750,000	204,908	113,771	1,157,917	66,279	97,601	35,073	77,900
City . . . . .	720,000	289,793	.....	1,625,459	100,744	58,701	132,026	103,230
Merchants' Exchange . . . . .	750,000	231,307	.....	1,426,249	82,822	110,309	85,057	78,200
Phenix . . . . .	500,000	222,592	112,500	1,154,300	109,034	.....	182,904	46,425
Leather Manufacturers' . . . . .	600,000	249,253	50,000	935,759	57,910	109,299	85,000	85,000
Tradesmen's . . . . .	400,000	181,928	.....	896,485	49,797	36,176	95,522	71,920
Seventh Ward . . . . .	500,000	94,128	.....	639,867	38,530	5,612	5,000	134,900
Butchers' & Drovers' . . . . .	500,000	256,024	.....	1,169,203	38,993	41,413	107,240	47,250
Mechanics' & Traders' . . . . .	200,000	172,725	.....	485,928	15,971	21,262	41,848	45,725
Greenwich . . . . .	200,000	136,355	37,500	488,037	26,297	22,052	37,700	30,550
Brooklyn . . . . .	200,000	154,354	.....	443,208	10,104	11,042	28,555	108,700
Westchester County . . . . .	200,000	256,360	.....	355,744	13,629	4,450	12,187	26,509
Newburgh . . . . .	140,000	234,882	.....	347,465	20,522	12,700	24,495	36,502
Orange County . . . . .	105,660	192,699	.....	255,284	14,476	20,836	9,848	7,111
Poughkeepsie . . . . .	100,000	190,523	.....	249,492	8,044	25,270	15,865	35,250

## LIST OF BANKS—Continued

In the State of New York subject to the Bank Fund law, in operation on the 1st of January, 1834

Banks	Capital employed	Bank notes in circulation	Due commissioners of the canal fund	Loans and discounts	Specie	Directors' liabilities to the bank as principle	Directors' liabilities to the bank as sureties	Stock owned by directors
Ulster County . . . . .	100,000	163,902	.....	234,605	4,064	10,807	16,159	22,750
Catskill . . . . .	150,000	233,561	.....	356,124	6,828	34,387	7,436	
Tanner's . . . . .	100,000	186,666	.....	236,237	6,726	13,385	11,928	52,650
Hudson River . . . . .	150,000	284,297	.....	264,510	5,772	26,722	21,086	56,700
Albany . . . . .	240,000	121,342	78,500	559,299	23,725	40,420	22,405	24,900
Mechanics' & Farmers' . . . . .	442,000	202,098	142,537	1,069,853	25,607	77,730	24,032	109,752
New York State . . . . .	369,600	230,351	144,950	887,666	22,017	55,245	46,241	
Canal . . . . .	300,000	111,098	124,226	812,336	5,781	10,523	83,276	56,380
Troy . . . . .	440,000	141,152	183,600	972,246	11,463	61,971	70,102	61,230
Farmers' & Mechanics' . . . . .	278,000	141,845	50,000	675,180	9,920	31,772	25,579	71,360
Merchants' & Mechanics' . . . . .	300,000	101,710	261,437	729,101	7,210	46,010	51,323	49,750
Troy City . . . . .	300,000	119,263	50,000	511,821	9,005	.....	91,482	50,000
Lansingburgh . . . . .	120,000	116,410	.....	264,992	.....	.....	15,252	20,760
Whitehall . . . . .	100,000	147,161	56,191	243,534	8,179	25,347	7,502	29,225
Essex County . . . . .	100,000	73,984	.....	145,365	5,513	13,276	10,665	4,675
Saratoga County . . . . .	100,000	150,116	49,050	249,502	6,048	11,650	16,482	36,675
Mohawk . . . . .	165,000	49,800	37,954	252,168	10,431	16,908	32,569	27,470
Schenectady . . . . .	150,000	235,551	.....	358,044	13,808	9,921	34,882	39,900
Montgomery County . . . . .	100,000	128,641	.....	245,298	7,151	12,148	18,269	35,850
Central . . . . .	120,000	158,189	.....	260,188	7,946	19,463	17,437	72,180
Otsego County . . . . .	100,000	171,468	.....	242,300	4,020	8,140	24,414	64,850

# HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

19

Herkimer County	200,000	264,302	.....	337,239	11,867	21,813	36,156	39,975
Broome County	100,000	168,688	.....	236,705	5,452	16,516	9,319	37,625
Chenango	120,000	190,465	.....	279,485	7,973	8,237	26,785	43,530
Madison County	100,000	185,152	27,000	238,668	6,831	13,663	9,662	52,050
Utica and Branch	600,000	498,716	125,028	1,211,015	30,992	45,252	125,405	93,720
Rome	100,000	165,043	17,294	246,679	11,903	18,266	10,944	28,900
Lewis County	100,000	86,242	.....	116,610	5,852	4,108	7,114	21,250
Jefferson County	80,000	121,971	.....	192,918	11,865	8,098	8,296	19,950
Ogdensburg	100,000	155,779	30,000	206,559	11,689	20,210	12,712	45,750
Oswego	150,000	158,153	13,379	307,122	9,355	7,431	23,810	14,450
Salina	150,000	174,746	75,642	367,258	7,776	12,361	11,822	61,700
Onondaga County	150,000	204,425	115,359	357,662	11,465	18,156	20,799	34,500
Auburn	200,000	302,267	.....	456,813	15,993	6,300	9,524	91,975
Cayuga County	250,000	192,918	.....	310,267	18,242	28,882	52,275	59,500
Seneca County	200,000	290,476	.....	436,715	13,074	23,950	16,493	61,800
Geneva	400,000	502,638	20,225	769,947	16,181	5,622	35,026	74,800
Ithaca	200,000	349,470	.....	459,669	3,658	19,262	26,638	87,240
Yates County	100,000	175,360	20,280	245,610	6,787	12,918	19,533	52,000
Chemung Canal	200,000	248,302	.....	302,495	7,108	8,981	11,512	37,750
Steuben County	150,000	258,801	.....	342,695	28,623	17,659	24,793	38,500
Wayne County	100,000	159,309	50,031	249,202	6,769	9,393	23,622	31,075
Ontario and Branch	500,000	279,466	116,046	970,588	14,030	46,602	97,582	48,050
Livingston County	100,000	165,092	.....	244,304	9,740	24,959	5,998	90,600
Monroe	300,000	339,631	136,028	694,517	16,018	16,444	25,835	95,725
Genesee	100,000	194,934	27,000	249,857	13,004	15,610	14,400	26,580
Lockport	100,000	143,713	59,601	233,151	13,184	23,043	.....	36,950
Buffalo	200,000	164,100	84,950	298,647	34,062	27,392	16,555	87,000
Chautauqua County	100,000	122,024	.....	218,211	9,891	13,456	14,377	17,750

\$22,731,460

## BANKS NOT SUBJECT TO THE BANK FUND LAW.

BANKS	CAPITAL	BANKS	CAPITAL
Manhattan Company . . . . .	\$2,050,000	Commercial Bank . . . . .	\$235,000
Fulton Bank . . . . .	600,000	Bank of Rochester . . . . .	250,000
North River Bank . . . . .	500,000		
Delaware and Hudson Canal Company . . . . .	500,000		
Chemical Manufacturing Company . . . . .	400,000	Amount of capital brought down	\$5,115,000
Dry Dock Company . . . . .	200,000		\$22,731,460
Long Island Bank . . . . .	300,000	Total capital of State banks . . . . .	\$27,846,460
Dutchess County Bank . . . . .	90,000		

## STATE OF NEW YORK

## Aggregate Statement of sixty-nine Banks reporting to the Bank Commissioners, January 1, 1834

Discounted notes . . . . .	\$43,712,955 98	Capital possessed . . . . .	\$22,730,264 00
Bonds and mortgages . . . . .	730,951 51	Bank notes in circulation . . . . .	15,402,705 54
Debts in judgment . . . . .	302,700 99	Profits . . . . .	3,005,560 77
Debts in suit . . . . .	131,140 80	Deposits to apply on debts . . . . .	141,563 19
Special loans . . . . .	1,421,876 30	Dividends unpaid . . . . .	186,168 76
Over drafts . . . . .	196,867 28	Due State of New York . . . . .	78,321 54
		" Commissioners of canal fund . . . . .	2,572,590 86
Stocks owned by the banks . . . . .	\$46,496,492 86	" United States . . . . .	2,409,533 86
Real estate . . . . .	121,249 11	" other banks . . . . .	8,722,281 76
Personal estate . . . . .	1,071,100 15	" individual depositors . . . . .	8,402,739 36
Expenses . . . . .	14,255 94	Special loans . . . . .	694,106 89
Bank fund . . . . .	208,201 20	Due parent banks by branches . . . . .	437,016 72
Specie . . . . .	229,875 71		
Bills of other solvent banks . . . . .	2,196,957 79		
Cash items . . . . .	5,623,522 53		
Due from other corpo'ns and bankers . . . . .	844,037 12		
Due from branch banks . . . . .	7,538,226 29		
	438,934 55		
	<u>\$64,782,853 25</u>		<u>\$64,782,853 25</u>

Unfortunately for the success of the system, eleven New York banks failed in 1841 and 1842, with an aggregate capital of \$3,150,000. Since the claims to be paid were \$2,559,000 and the total amount of the paid-up safety fund was only \$1,876,073, an extra amount had to be raised. The state therefore issued a 6 per cent. stock, the redemption of which paid the disastrous bill, and the safety-fund plan ceased to exist.

Even during such troublous times the Chemical Bank was favorably regarded. John Mason's reputation was such that any enterprise claiming his active interest was *ipso facto* considered as a safe investment. The stock of the Bank, quoted at first 105 on September 11, 1824, gradually rose to 109 asked and 108 $\frac{3}{4}$  offered by November 13th. After a decline to 102 $\frac{1}{4}$  on December 11th, the price rose by January, 1825, to 106 $\frac{1}{2}$ . In November, 1832, the stock was quoted at 116 $\frac{3}{4}$ .

The quaint old New York *Spectator*, published by Francis Hall & Co., 46 Pine Street, under date of October 28, 1839, mentions the stock under the heading of "Prices of Stocks" as follows:

"Chemical Bank. 90 offered. No. Asked."

A statement of the Bank as of February 2, 1835, may be interesting at this time, together with a list of the directors holding office on August 31st, the same year:



## HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

Statement of the funds and property of the New York  
Chemical Manufacturing Company, February 2, 1835:

Chemical manufactory . . . . .	\$100,000 00
Due from factory . . . . .	59,787 94
Bills discounted . . . . .	858,547 32
Bonds and loans on demand . . . . .	5,818 50
Notes of city banks . . . . .	68,693 49
Due from city banks . . . . .	92,975 27
Due from country banks . . . . .	10,008 43
Banking house, etc. . . . .	1,600 00
Specie . . . . .	50,020 71
	<hr/>
	\$1,247,451 66
Capital stock . . . . .	\$500,000 00
Surplus fund . . . . .	22,848 94
Bills in circulation . . . . .	206,381 00
Due to city banks . . . . .	67,318 41
Due to country banks . . . . .	3,264 12
Dividends unpaid . . . . .	18,197 32
Individual deposits . . . . .	429,441 87
	<hr/>
	\$1,247,451 66

## LIST OF DIRECTORS, AUGUST 31, 1835

JOHN MASON, President  
GIDEON TUCKER  
THOMAS T. WOODRUFF  
GERARD H. COSTER  
WILLIAM T. McCOUN

GEORGE JONES  
JOHN Q. JONES, Factory Agent  
ARCHIBALD CRAIG, Cashier  
SAMUEL A. PORTER, Notary  
Public

## CHAPTER III

### THE FINANCIAL STORM OF 1837 — ALL SPECIE PAYMENTS SUSPENDED

The trouble that had come with Governor Van Buren's safety-fund system was but a breath compared to the financial storm that assailed the banks of New York in 1837. Emigration to the West had excited the public imagination and speculation to a point where it seemed that there could be no top to the prices for Western lands. State banks recklessly increased their paper currency. The Bank of the United States, failing to renew its charter in 1836, ceased operations. Thus the state banks were left to their own devices, and when the Government, in July of that year, brought out its "specie circular," ordering that only gold and silver should be accepted in payment for public lands, the speculative balloon was punctured.

In such a general collapse the conservative were involved, if only temporarily, as well as the speculative. Chemical Bank stock fell from 124 in January to 98 in July, although by October it was back to 102, and by December to 112.

Moreover, the Chemical followed the other

twenty New York City banks in the suspension of specie payments. It had not yet attained the firmness which more than twenty years later enabled it to stand alone as a cash payer during a similar catastrophe.

The anger and denunciation at the suspension were expressed with characteristic energy by James Gordon Bennett of the New York *Herald* in the daily financial articles which his was the first newspaper to print. He had made his two-year-old sheet a real power in the city, in spite of the hostility which it is evident must have been aroused by such breezy, independent, and scathing passages as this:

The banks of this city were the first to disgrace themselves in a body by suspending, during the midst of a ridiculous panic, widely produced by their own depositors in order to speculate in bullion for exportation. There was no necessity for the suspension.

On July 1, 1837, the Chemical's specie had fallen to \$11,383, from \$57,661 on January 1st, and its circulation from \$266,969 to \$194,634. Its profits were only \$69,068.

That Chemical Bank notes were preferable, on account of the stability and soundness of the institution, to those of other banks, is to be gathered from another sprightly article of Mr. Bennett's, dated May 16, 1837. With high newspaper enterprise, he announced that he would pay specie



BANKING HOUSE OF CHEMICAL MFG. CO.



upon five-dollar notes of the Chemical Bank to ladies alone:

"My object," he said, "is to furnish as much as I can the gentler sex with change to make their little purchases in the shops and markets, and to rescue as many as I can from the arts of shavers and speculators now flooding the city. Be it recollected also, that I only redeem the little Chemical's notes because I have full confidence in the character and integrity of John Mason, Esq., its worthy president, and the other directors of that institution. Under the auspices of this good man, who is a gentleman and a man of business of the old school, who abominates all the kiting inventions of Wall Street, I have no doubt the Chemical will resume specie payments as soon as, if not sooner than, any other bank in the city. The hours for redemption are between 11 and 1 o'clock to-morrow, at 21 Ann Street, five dollars for each person. Be punctual and be pretty, fair ones; the world is not yet at an end."

Another amusing article, reflecting the assured value of the Chemical notes, but written in a different vein, appears in the *Herald* of September 21, 1837:

Fatigued with exertions on the Sessions Court, on Saturday we pushed toward Park Row and jumped into little John Kelly's handsome hack.

"Where to?" says the attentive John.

"Barclay Street, Newark boat," and we soon stood before the Cerberus stationed there to take toll. We presented a Rhode Island bill.

"Can't take it."

"Providence!"

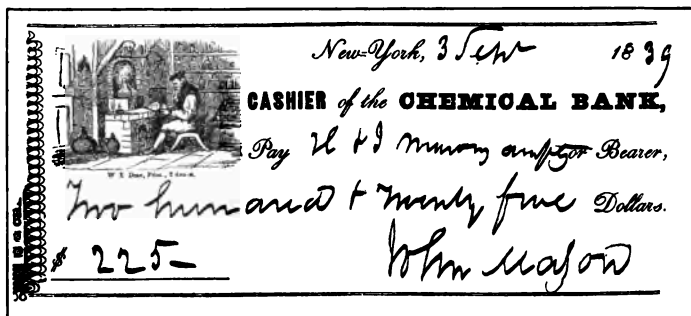
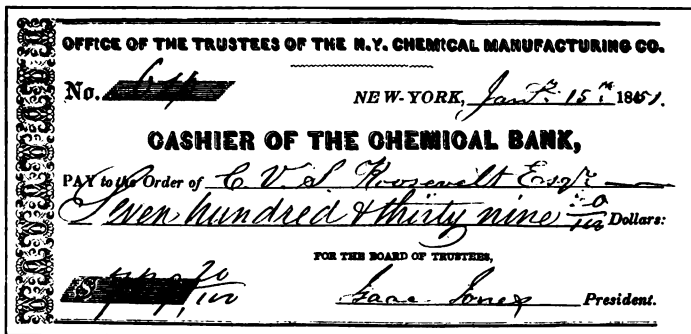
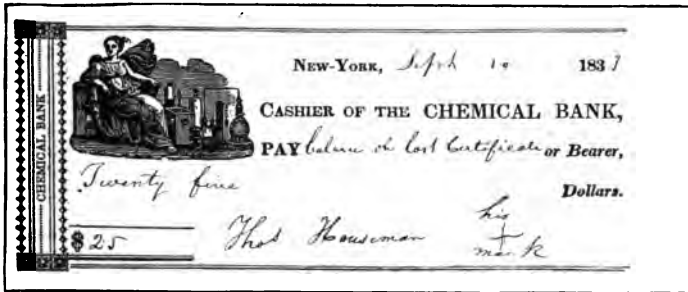
"We have nothing to do with Providence here," said he huskily. We looked into his eyes and felt bound to believe him.

"Boston," we exclaimed, presenting a piece of paper purporting to be payable in the modern Athens.

"Boston's bankrupt."

"Chemical Bank of New York," presenting a pale-faced five that smelt of sulphuric acid, iodine of azote, phosphuretted hydrogen, oxide of tellurium, and a host of hydrates.

"Good as gold," said the old surly, giving us the change, and the piece of paper did act like the "powder of projection," for by it we were placed on board of the boat.



CHEMICAL BANK CHECKS





## CHAPTER IV

### WINDING UP THE CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

The effects of the panic of 1837 had not blown over two years later, for a financial writer declared on September 26, 1839:

The pressure in the money market has not been so great since the spring of 1837 as it is at this moment. It is even doubtful among the wise-  
acres of Wall Street whether the pressure now is not greater than in that year of excitement, virtue, folly, wisdom and d — n nonsense.

And Philip Hone, whose diary is a mine of reference for this period, wrote in August of the same year:

The New York papers contain every day an account of increased commercial distress.

There was no "distress," however, connected with the ownership of Chemical Bank notes, as one learns from another filing of James Gordon Bennett's. A disastrous fire had destroyed more than four hundred and fifty houses in Mobile, Ala., with a loss of \$1,750,000. Mr. Bennett,

drawing a one-hundred-dollar check to aid the sufferers, remarked that he made it payable in Chemical Bank notes, "which are equivalent to gold and silver and not a degraded currency like the bank notes of Philadelphia."

A serious blow to the Chemical Bank, on September 26, 1839, was the death of John Mason. Few severer tests could have been made of the conservatism and soundness of his banking methods than the events of 1837. His place as a pioneer banker is best indicated by the simple statement that it was in these same troublous years that the public feeling of confidence in the Chemical Bank, which has never been shaken to this day, became established.

The new president, Isaac Jones, was elected October 1st, and at the same time John Quentin Jones, cousin to the new president, succeeded Archibald Craig as cashier. First one, then the other, of the Joneses was to control the destinies of the Chemical for nearly forty years. Both had the closest associations with John Mason, ties not only of business but also of family. Three of the latter's daughters married members of the Jones family, Mary becoming the wife of Isaac Jones.

Extract from letters by "Old New Yorker" to the *Evening Post* of New York, published in 1882:

"After the great fire of 1835 it was proposed to organize two hose companies in the Third Ward, and one of the residents on whom I called for a



PHILIP HONE



subscription was Joshua Jones, who lived in style in Chambers Street, and whose son Isaac married the daughter of John Mason, the President of the Chemical Bank, and, at one time, the owner of much of what is now the Central Park. Mr. Jones declined to subscribe, but the necessary \$1,600 was obtained nevertheless, and with it the two hose-carts and 1,000 feet of hose. I became foreman of one of the companies, and Samuel N. Wyckoff assistant foreman, and when the whole Fire Department had become disorganized by the removal of Chief Engineer James Gulick, these companies used all their energy at every fire that occurred. Having been asked repeatedly by Mr. Wyckoff to contribute something to our company, Mr. Jones at last consented on condition that the company should be able to play, through hose attached to a hydrant, from the street to the roof of his house. The nearest hydrant was on the northeast corner of Chambers Street and West Broadway, and it took about 300 feet of hose to reach the curb in the front of Mr. Jones's residence; but though the chances were decidedly against the success of the attempt, it was determined to make it, and at the appointed time Mr. Jones stood on the roof to see that there was no mistake. The hose company had resolved to soak his house for him if they failed in reaching the roof; and as the cornice of the building projected some distance toward the street, and the firemen were, in consequence, unable to place

a solid stream on the roof, they gave the front of the building a good wash, and began to fill the cellar. Mr. Jones, from his lofty pinnacle, begged them to stop, promising, for his own preservation probably, to subscribe a hundred dollars to the company's fund."

A noteworthy day for the Chemical Bank was in 1842, when a new clerk was taken on — George Gilbert Williams. During no less than thirty-six years he was to be trained in the Mason and Jones methods of solid banking. And after that time, as we shall see, his personal leadership of the Bank extended over an eventful quarter of a century.

The main problem before the new managers was the procuring of a bank charter to replace that of the Chemical Manufacturing Company, which was to expire in 1844. This had to be secured under the Free Banking law, which had gone into operation in 1838. It permitted any individual or association to engage in banking on depositing, with the Comptroller, stocks of the United States, state stocks paying 5 per cent., or stocks, bonds, and mortgages on improved, productive, and unencumbered real estate worth double the amount secured by the mortgage, over and above all buildings. The Comptroller was required to deliver to such an individual or association an equal amount of bank notes for circulation. No specific amount was required nor were the stockholders liable as individuals for losses. Abuses soon sprang up,

and many banks were organized on weak security. The law was modified in 1840 by excluding the depositing of stocks from other states for bank notes, but the evil was by no means wholly remedied.

It was under the provisions of this law, in 1844, that a charter was finally secured for the Chemical Bank — “to terminate January 1, 1899” — and it operated under this charter for twenty-one years. There were 3,000 shares of \$100 each, and the charter provided for five directors. This capitalization of \$300,000 was retained without change until February 1, 1907. But the stock, at first quoted in the '80's, sold in less than sixty years for more than fifty times as much, an increment of nearly 100 per cent. a year for more than half a century.

At public auction, by A. J. Bleecker & Co., on June 10, 1844, there were sold all the city and state stocks owned by the Chemical Manufacturing Company, and a goodly list they formed. On May 27th, at a trustees' meeting, at which W. T. McCoun, Isaac Jones, George Jones, Moses Tucker, and George B. Gilbert were present, it had been decided thus to wind up the company's affairs. The sum of \$153,196.90 was obtained through the sale of nineteen different kinds of stock, aggregating 149,196 shares. Most of the securities were state, canal, and New York City water loans. The highest price was  $112\frac{3}{4}$  for a 7 per cent. New York water loan, \$21,000 face



value. Only two of the nineteen blocks went as low as 101 — a block of 12,200 New York water shares, and another water stock of 11,250 shares.

That not a single block of stock sold for less than 101 is perhaps the most significant commentary upon the business acumen of the men who had brought the Chemical Manufacturing Company, during those twenty years of existence, to this point of successful transformation into a bank pure and simple.

Directors on February 24, 1844, then trustees of the Chemical Manufacturing Company, discharged 1851, were:

ISAAC JONES, President

GEORGE JONES

A. GORDON HAMERSLEY

WILLIAM T. McCOUN

GEORGE B. GILBERT

GIDEON TUCKER (died 1845)

JOHN Q. JONES, Cashier and

Factory Agent

MOSES TUCKER

## CHAPTER V

### THE NEW STOCKHOLDERS AND THE NEW PRESIDENT, JOHN Q. JONES

The list of the subscribers to the new stock of the Chemical Bank in 1844 makes reminiscent reading. Although it is a small list, comprising only twenty-eight names, many of the men whom it brings to remembrance were not only among the financial and mercantile leaders of their day, but also founded institutions and families that have remained representative of the best up to the present time. The complete list is given on the following page.

Some changes of vast importance took place in the Bank's personnel. John B. Desdoity was appointed cashier at a salary of \$1,500 per annum, and Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt, John D. Wolfe, Bradish Johnson, and Isaac L. Platt, together with John Q. Jones, were elected directors. Their first meeting was held on January 30, 1844, and at this time President Isaac Jones retired. What his quiet and sterling character had meant to the Bank and to those whose business interests were identified with the institution with which he was for so long a time officially connected may be judged

NAME	BUSINESS	LOCATION	RESIDENCE	SHARES
John D. Wolfe	Hardware	87 Maiden Lane	86 Chambers St.	300
*Peter Goelet		163 Pearl St.	53 Broadway	300
*Joseph Sampson	Auctioneer		B'way, cor. Bond St.	300
C. V. S. Roosevelt	Hardware	94 Maiden Lane	60 Hudson St.	200
Robert McCoskry	Merchant	98 Maiden Lane	B'way, cor. 14th St.	200
Arthur N. Gifford	Broker	Merchants' Exchg.	86 Liberty St.	150
*John Ferguson	Merchant			150
Davis S. Kennedy	Banker	46 Wall St.	5 Waverly Pl.	100
John Scott	Leather	23 Ferry St.	17 State St.	100
*Isaac L. Platt		98 Maiden Lane	155 Cherry St.	100
Charles M. Leupp	Plate Glass	6 Spruce St.	60 Rivington St.	100
Aquila G. Stout	Leather	20 Ferry St.	36 Rutgers St.	100
Alexander T. Stewart	Dry Goods	119 Maiden Lane	66 Amity St.	100
James Crane		257 Broadway	258 Ninth St.	100
Shepherd Knapp	Pres't Mechanics' Bank	16 Wall St.	6 Depew Row	75
James Mills	Pres Bowery Svcs. Bank		2 Washington Sq.	70
Samuel Bell				50
Bradish Johnson	Merchant	249 Washington St.	47 Walker St.	50
H. Bodner, Jr.	Importer	7 William St.	65 Amity St.	50
*Thomas T. Woodruff	Builder			50
*J. W. Hamersley	Lawyer	18 Wall St.	530 Broadway	50
*John Horsburgh			55 Murray St.	50
*Philip Embury			Jersey City, N. J.	50
*John Le Maire				50
*Daniel Lord, Jr.	Lawyer	12 Barclay St.		30
John Horspool	Cabinetmaker	Merchants' Exchg.	26 Beach St.	25
		16 White St.	16 White St.	25
*Originally stockholders in Chemical Manufacturing Company.				<u>3,000</u>

by this extract from the brief obituary notice in the *New York Times*, at his death, March 14, 1854:

Mr. Jones was a director of the late Chemical Bank and afterward president until the expiration of its charter. Then, as trustee, he acted in the closing of its affairs until all its assets were distributed. He was modest, unobtrusive and of few words. Gentle, hospitable, charitable, he drew friends closely to himself by esteem and regard. His integrity sustained the confidence of those whose interests were in his charge, a confidence never violated, never justly impaired or assailed.

In his place the Bank obtained the services as president of the man who was to steer its course safely and brilliantly through smooth seas and rough during the next thirty-four years — John Quentin Jones, whose salary was only \$2,000.

It came to be said in later years that although John Mason had been called "The Father of the Chemical Bank," John Quentin Jones had virtually become the Bank itself. He had been surrounded by the atmosphere of the work at 216 Broadway long before he held any position of trust there; and he could have had no better teachers, both in the theory and practice of banking, than John Mason and his (John Quentin's) cousin Isaac Jones.

When President John Q. Jones called to order the first meeting under the new charter, on January 30th, he was already a man of wide and un-

usual influence. A story frequently told is that of an intimate friend who once mentioned the name of a man to whom he had lent money on a mortgage, but who had positively refused to pay up. Mr. Jones's friend did not want to distress the debtor, but he needed the money.

"Leave the mortgage with me," said Mr. Jones. His friend did so.

A few days later he received a note asking him to call at Mr. Jones's office for the interest on his debt, after which time it was paid as promptly as it fell due.

The whole explanation lay in a polite note which had been written by Mr. Jones to the debtor, and which exerted that indefinable something called personal influence, although the man was a stranger to him and had previously refused to pay his friend a single dollar.

No cost was spared in the engraving of the magnificent one, two, and five dollar bills that were at once issued. We quote from the *New York Tribune* of May 15, 1844:

"The Fulton Bank is issuing a superior note from the house of Tappan, Carpenter & Co., and the Chemical Bank, a more superior one, if possible, from the house of Danforth, Spencer & Hufty."

It was soon evident that, in spite of the wealth and prominence of the active men among the directors and stockholders, the guiding force in



CHEMICAL BANK NOTES



the career of the Bank was to be John Quentin Jones. His plan from the first was to command public confidence by doing business with a small capital, while maintaining a large surplus. Success was apparent in the class of depositors attracted, among whom were many of the leading merchants in the city.

On June 2, 1848, Mr. C. V. S. Roosevelt was elected temporary vice-president and held that office until April 2, 1849.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FIRST DIVIDEND

To keep at all times a surplus so large as to afford ample protection to depositors, instead of taking it out in profits to stockholders, was President Jones's determination. He was able to adhere to it because of his consummate ability and unremitting concentration upon the Chemical's affairs, which, aside from his passion for shooting and outdoor walks, and his daily intimacy with Ludlow Thomas and other close friends, formed the one interest of his bachelor life.

By 1848, however, the surplus had grown so large that even President Jones became anxious. On December 26th the directors met in the old-fashioned, ill-lighted back room at 216 Broadway and deliberated. The result was this simple record, inscribed upon the minutes of the meeting:

On motion, *Resolved*: That it is expedient to declare a dividend, payable on the second day of January next.

On motion, *Resolved*: That a dividend of 6 per cent, payable to the stockholders of this Bank, on the 2nd of January, 1849, is hereby declared.

J. Q. JONES, President.

Two days later the daily papers carried this brief notice:

CHEMICAL BANK, Dec. 27, 1848.

A dividend of 6 per cent. will be paid on the 2nd of January next.

J. B. DESDOITY, Cashier.

Thus was announced the first of a series of dividends maintained with clockwork regularity to this day. Moreover, their percentage has constantly increased, or else has been upheld, in spite of the severest financial reverses that the nation has undergone during the years since.

The total dividends for the year 1849 were 12 per cent., a figure higher than that of any of the twenty-two dividend-paying banks in New York City.

STOCKHOLDERS AT DATE OF FIRST DIVIDEND  
JANUARY 2, 1849

SAMUEL BELL	JOHN LEMAIRE
JAPHET BISHOP	ISABELLA LEE
HENRY BODMER, JR.	ROBERT MCCOSKRY
ARCHIBALD DAVIE	JAMES MILLS
PHILIP EMBURY	ISAAC L. PLATT
JOHN FERGUSON	CORNELIUS V. S. ROOSEVELT
A. N. GIFFORD	JOSEPH SAMPSON
PETER GOELET	ALEXANDER T. STEWART
A. GORDON HAMERSLEY	A. G. STOUT
JOHN HORSBURGH	JOHN SCOTT
JOHN Q. JONES	WILLIAM WHITEWRIGHT
BRADISH JOHNSON	JOHN D. WOLFE
DAVID S. KENNEDY	THOMAS T. WOODRUFF

Another memorable event for the Bank was its move five blocks farther up Broadway, early in 1850. The historic "216 Broadway, opposite St. Paul's," had to be forsaken for the larger quarters at 270 Broadway, at which spot the Chemical is still to be found.

Beginning with this same year, the country entered upon a period of prosperity and of multiplication of banks. In New York City there was so much discount and check business that some simplification was imperatively called for, and when in 1853 the New York Clearing House was formed the Chemical Bank was one of its original members, as attested by its minutes for September 13, 1853:

*Resolved:* That this Bank agrees to come into the arrangements of the associated banks for the more easy adjustment of balances between the city banks.

This list of the banks of the city of New York on September 29, 1853, is quoted to show how many changes have taken place among the city's financial institutions in the more than half century:

NAME	DATE OF CHARTER	CAPITAL
Bank of New York . . . .	1791 March 21	\$1,500,000
Manhattan Company . . . .	1799 April 2	2,050,000
Merchants' Bank (commenced business in 1803) . . . .	1805 June 7	1,490,000
Mechanics' Bank . . . .	1810 March 23	1,440,000
Union Bank. . . . .	1811 March 1	1,000,000
Bank of America . . . . .	1812 June 1	2,000,000

## HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

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NAME	DATE OF CHARTER	CAPITAL
Phenix Bank . . . . .	1812 June 15	1,200,000
City Bank . . . . .	1812 June 16	1,000,000
North River Bank . . . . .	1821	665,000
Tradesmen's Bank . . . . .	1823	400,000
Fulton Bank . . . . .	1824 March 1	600,000
Chemical Bank . . . . .	1824 April 1	300,000
Dry Dock Bank . . . . .	1825	200,000
Merchants' Exchange Bank . . . . .	1828 June 1	1,235,000
National Bank . . . . .	1829 April 30	750,000
Butchers' and Drovers' Bank . . . . .	1830 April 8	600,000
Mechanics' and Traders' Bank . . . . .	1830 April 15	200,000
Greenwich Bank . . . . .	1830 April 17	200,000
Leather Manufacturers' Bank . . . . .	1832 April 23	600,000
Seventh Ward Bank . . . . .	1833 April	500,000
Bank of the State of New York . . . . .	1836 May 18	2,000,000
American Exchange Bank . . . . .	1838 July 17	2,000,000
Mechanics' Banking Association . . . . .	1838 Aug. 1	632,000
Bank of Commerce . . . . .	1839 Jany. 1	5,000,000
Bowery Bank . . . . .	1847 April 20	356,650
Broadway Bank . . . . .	1849 Aug. 9	600,000
Ocean Bank . . . . .	1849 Dec. 10	1,000,000
Mercantile Bank . . . . .	1849 Dec. 28	600,000
Pacific Bank . . . . .	1850 Oct. 17	422,700
Bank of the Republic . . . . .	1851 Jany. 20	1,500,000
Chatham Bank . . . . .	1851 Feby. 1	450,000
People's Bank . . . . .	1851 Feby. 8	412,500
Bank of North America . . . . .	1851 Feby. 25	1,000,000
Hanover Bank . . . . .	1851 March 24	1,000,000
Irving Bank . . . . .	1851 April 4	300,000
Metropolitan Bank . . . . .	1851 April 7	2,000,000
New York Exchange Bank . . . . .	1851 April 21	130,000
Citizens' Bank . . . . .	1851 May 20	350,000
Knickerbocker Bank . . . . .	1851 July 16	400,000
Grocers' Bank . . . . .	1851 Aug. 1	300,000
Empire City Bank . . . . .	1851 Dec. 30	302,462.50
Suffolk Bank . . . . .	1852 June 26	250,000

## HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

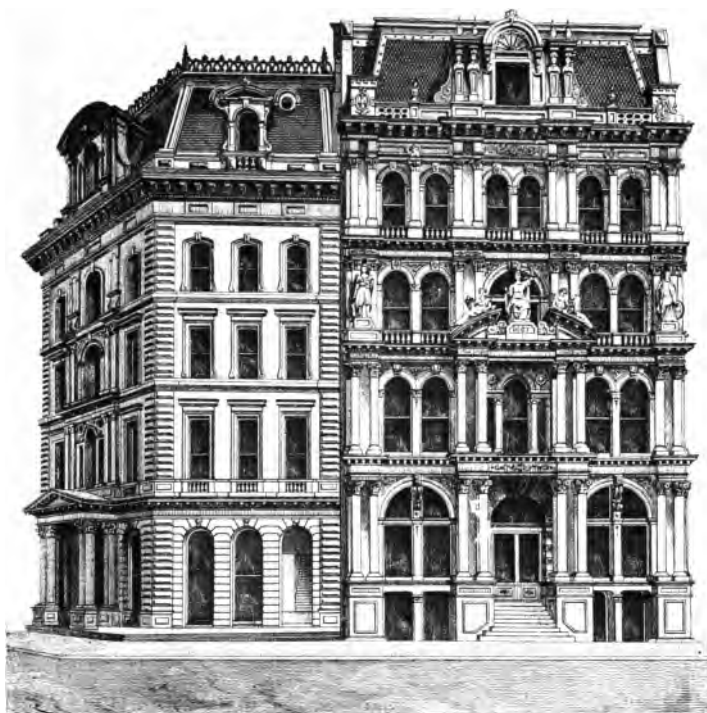
NAME	DATE OF CHARTER	CAPITAL
Nassau Bank . . . . .	1852 Aug. 1	500,000
East River Bank . . . . .	1852 Sept. 8	413,050
Market Bank . . . . .	1852 Nov. 1	650,000
St. Nicholas Bank . . . . .	1852 Nov. 22	500,000
Shoe and Leather Bank . . . . .	1852 Nov. 23	600,000
Corn Exchange Bank . . . . .	1852 Dec. 6	582,780
Central Bank . . . . .	1853 Jany. 17	300,000
Continental Bank . . . . .	1853 Jany. 18	1,500,000
Bank of the Commonwealth . . . . .	1853 March 1	700,000
Oriental Bank . . . . .	1853 April 19	300,000
Marine Bank . . . . .	1853 May 5	500,000
Bank of the Union . . . . .	1853 May 23	300,000
Atlantic Bank . . . . .	1853 May 25	326,200
Island City Bank . . . . .	1853 July 21	300,000
Eighth Avenue Bank . . . . .	1853 Aug. 30	200,000

Three of the presidents of the Clearing House, by the way, were later supplied by the Chemical — John Quentin Jones, George G. Williams, and William H. Porter.

Of the enormous business activity in every part of the country, the Chemical received its full share. In 1855 the dividends were increased to 18 per cent., and the next year to 24 per cent.

In November of 1855 the faithful cashier, Mr. Desdoity, died. The ability of George G. Williams was recognized when, on December 13th, he was promoted to the cashier's position from his former duties of discount clerk. His salary was \$2,000.

Quarterly Report of the Chemical Bank on Saturday, the 29th day of December, 1855:



VIEW CORNER OF ANN ST. & BROADWAY  
(FORMER SITE OF BARNUM'S MUSEUM)

NATIONAL PARK BANK AND HERALD BUILDING — 216-220  
BROADWAY — 1868



270 BROADWAY — 1851



## HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

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## RESOURCES

Loans and discounts . . . . .	\$1,288,932 35
Overdrafts . . . . .	410 67
Due from banks . . . . .	23,968 19
Due from the directors of the Bank \$45,477.31, including all liabilities, whether absolute or contingent . . . . .	
Real estate . . . . .	52,453 72
Specie . . . . .	304,551 14
Cash items . . . . .	91,785 39
Stocks . . . . .	374,746 77
Bills of solvent banks . . . . .	14,788 00
Loss and expense account . . . . .	14,183 82
	<hr/>
	\$2,165,820 05

## LIABILITIES

Capital . . . . .	\$ 300,000 00
Surplus . . . . .	544,087 78
Circulation registered . . . . .	\$339,127
Less notes on hand . . . . .	95,689
Due to banks . . . . .	<hr/> 51,246 28
Due depositors on demand . . . . .	1,027,047 99
	<hr/>
	\$2,165,820 05



## CHAPTER VII

### "OLD BULLION" IN THE PANIC OF '57

The story that tells how the Chemical earned its nickname of "Old Bullion" may start from September 21, 1857, when it joined with the other Clearing House banks in refusing to pay interest on deposits, as "unsound in principle, unsafe in practice, and contrary to the best interests of both our dealers and ourselves," and which policy has been adhered to ever since. This was all very well, but the dangerous business conditions which called for the resolution were soon to develop to a point where none but an impregnable institution could keep up to the highest banking standard of conduct. As we shall see, the Chemical alone stood the test.

The first sign of trouble was the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company in August, 1857. To the public it was a bolt from an unclouded sky. The company's paid-up capital was \$2,000,000. Its failure was complete, and its business was never resumed. Here was the straw that broke the overlaid back of the entire financial and industrial structure of the United States for a while.

The country had bet on itself too heavily. Railroads, especially in the West, had been fearfully over-capitalized and overbuilt. Improvements had been projected to the tune of millions of dollars. In the Western tracts recently opened to settlement towns grew into cities in a few weeks.

Add to this the rise in commodity prices and the consequent speculation in them following the unprecedented increase in gold production begun by the California "Forty-niners," and the cause is plain for the crash of the industrial fabric that came in 1857, and that engulfed in the ruin wrought thousands of firms throughout every section of the country.

The banks of New York City felt the blow as they never have felt a blow, before or since. To save themselves, they decreased their loans of \$100,000,000 within nine weeks by 20 per cent. The effect upon merchants and other borrowers was, of course, stunning.

Even the savings banks had unprecedented runs. During the few days that the panic was at its height the Bowery Savings Bank paid out \$600,000.

"What has merely been termed a crisis," declared one newspaper, "has become paralysis."

At the height of the panic on Tuesday, October 13th, an observer wrote:

Had the banks been doubly as strong, they had no chance whatever of withstanding such a panic

spirit. In twenty-five years' experience in the Street we have seen nothing to compare with it. Every counting room was filled with its anxious crowd pressing up to the first teller's wicket, while thousands of speculators assembled outside the buildings.

On that day, after four and a half million of specie had been withdrawn, the doors of no less than eighteen banks were closed.

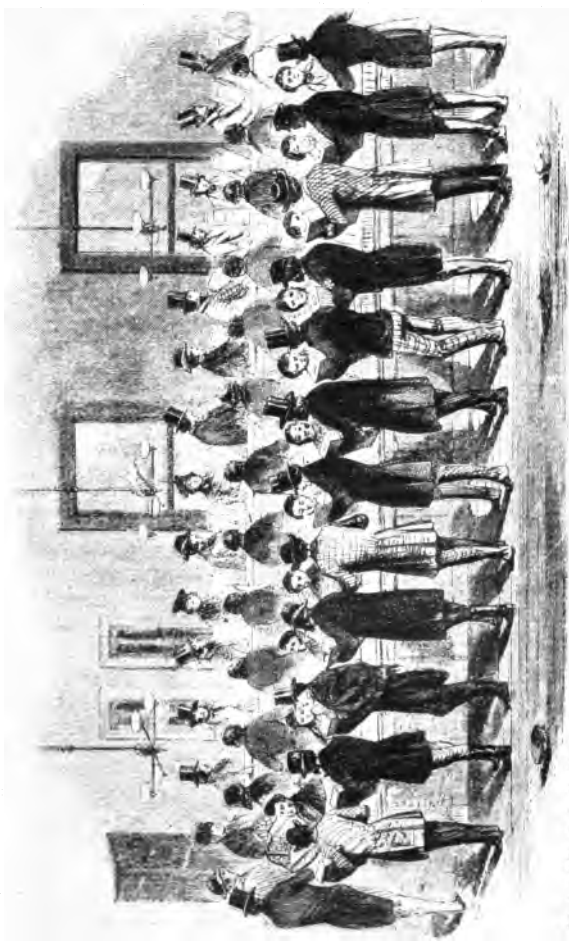
Scores of rich men lost their all. Thousands of others were in doubt as to whether they could recover a penny. Everywhere was the cry, "What is safe?"

The day before, some bank officers had met at the Clearing House and resolved:

That the banks of the City of New York are determined, at all hazards and under all circumstances, to perform their duty to the country and to all its great interests in the maintenance of specie payments and that all classes of the community should sustain them in carrying out this determination.

However, on the evening of the disastrous 13th itself, after a protracted meeting of bank officers, lasting until ten o'clock, it was decided that specie payments would have to be suspended.

Some of the banks felt confident of ability to continue paying cash. But none did (if the records are complete) in New York or anywhere else in the United States, with the exception of the Chemical Bank, and one or two interior banks having moderate liabilities.



Bank of New York Building

CLEARING ROOM AT THE WALL AND WILLIAM STREETS BUILDING, as depicted in 1858.

From Gibbons's "Banks of New York."



The memorable scene on the morning of October 14th was a favorite reminiscence of Jacob Cox Parsons, the Chemical's paying teller at the time.

"Well I remember the day. I waited with anxiety the arrival of the president. He walked in as quietly and undisturbed as usual. In reply to my question, 'What are we going to do, Mr. Jones?' he answered promptly, 'We will pay all demands on us in gold.'"

Robert McCoskry, a director, was an early arrival that morning. Softly whistling a favorite Scotch tune, his hands behind his back, he stood by the paying teller as the clamoring, frenzied depositors pressed up to the window for their money. One old woman in the throng thrust in a handful of bills. The paying teller saw that they were not Chemical Bank bills. He was about to hand them back.

"What is the matter, Mr. Parsons?" said Mr. McCoskry.

"Why, she has a lot of bills here of other banks."

"Oh, give the old lady the gold; if they cannot redeem their promises to pay, we'll do it for them."

The remark was received with an outburst of applause, and many withdrew satisfied they could get their money at any time.

From that day the familiar name of "Old Bullion" was applied to the Chemical, representing the popular belief in it as the only bank in the United States where the depositor could get real money during those panicky days. The abso-

lute bravery with which the Bank faced the fiercest crisis that the country had ever seen added to the reputation already conferred upon it in '37 for soundness under any financial condition whatsoever.

The public was not slow to appreciate the Bank's confidence in itself. The *Commercial Advertiser*, on the afternoon of the next day, said:

We learn that the Chemical Bank is redeeming their notes and deposits in specie this morning, and have expressed an intention to so continue. There is little or no pressure upon them to-day for redemption, and they are receiving a large addition to their deposits.

"An oasis in the desert" is what the New York *Herald* of the 15th termed the Bank's position. A special editorial ran as follows:

In the general wreck of the character of our banking institutions, it is gratifying to find that there is one left to represent the advantages of a legitimate banking system. Out of the thousands of banks existing throughout the Union there is at this moment only one specie-paying bank — the Chemical Bank of New York. It has not only been promptly meeting all the demands of this kind made upon it since the commencement of the panic, but is prepared to redeem and will continue, if necessary, to redeem in the same way, every dollar of its obligations. It has gold enough in its vaults at the present time to meet the whole of its liabilities; and on the system on which it is conducted, there is no condition of

things which can affect its character as a specie-paying bank. With a capital of only \$300,000, it has a surplus of over half a million, or nearly double its capital, which surplus is included in its deposits. It is managed by some half dozen of gentlemen who own all the stock; it pays a dividend of 6 per cent. quarterly, and its surplus is steadily increasing with these large dividends. These figures at once show the superior character of the management which has made of this establishment so honorable an exception to the necessity which has wrecked the faith and reputation of our banking institutions generally.

The enviable position which the Chemical Bank holds amidst the ruin by which it is surrounded fully illustrates the justice of the axioms that we have so frequently advanced on the subject of banking in this country. We have always said — and the recent disasters fully bear out the assertion — that if the banks preserved the legitimate course of their business, and kept clear from connection with speculators, they never could by any possibility be reduced to the painful alternative which they have just been driven to adopt.

In the measures which it will be necessary to have recourse to, to prevent the recurrence of these terrible monetary revulsions, the example of the Chemical Bank, standing out, as it does, in bold relief from the failure of its sister institutions, will, we trust, exercise its full influence. That which, in one instance, has been effected by the steady good sense and business capacity of a few practical minds, may serve as a useful guide in the changes called for in the general system.



Only one reference to these stirring times is found in the minutes of the Bank itself. It is under date of December 14th:

At an informal meeting of the directors on the 14th of October last it was decided not to suspend specie payments with the banks of this city which then suspended; not having suspended, no resumption takes place in connection with the other banks of the city, which this day resume.

What was the matter with all the other New York banks on October 31st? A financial writer of the day endeavored to analyze their condition, taking the weekly statements of fifty-four of them. He found that the average of the whole was one of specie to seven of liability. Twenty were above this average, thirty-four below it.

"This shows," adds the writer, "that an average of one to seven was not enough to prevent suspension. As an illustration, the Chemical Bank, with a liability of \$1,100,000, had \$327,000 of specie, or about one to thirty-six. The Chemical Bank stands firm even yet."

No comment on the Chemical's position during the closing months of 1857 could speak plainer than the simple figures in the case. Appended are extracts from the weekly statements of certain dates, showing the steady increase in specie:

DATE	SPECIE	CIRCULATION	DEPOSITS
Oct. 3, 1857	\$327,282	\$225,174	\$ 992,054
Nov. 7, 1857	579,461	186,856	1,525,191
Dec. 5, 1857	666,277	228,846	1,619,811



BILLS OF OTHER BANKS



On the first date, out of about fifty banks, only twelve had more specie than the Chemical, although twenty-three had more deposits. The situation by November 7th was that only five had more specie and but fifteen larger deposits. It was evident that the worst phase of the panic was passing away, and that the confidence of the public had been entirely won by the confidence that the Chemical Bank had shown in itself.

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTE BOOK OF THE CHEMICAL NATIONAL BANK, SEPTEMBER 21, 1857

The president is authorized to sign an agreement of which the following is a copy:

The undersigned banks located and doing business in the City of New York deeming that the payment of interest for the deposits of banks, bankers, insurance companies, railroads, and other corporations, also the deposits of individuals or firms, is unsound in principle, unsafe in practice and contrary to the best interests of both our dealers and ourselves, do hereby agree to discontinue and cease to allow interest, either directly or indirectly, for any and all deposits made with us on and after the first day of June, 1858, and to discontinue the allowance of interest on all the deposit accounts then standing upon our books for which interest may have been previously paid, provided that all the banks belonging to the New York Clearing House Association shall have on or before that date entered into and become bound by this agreement, and due notice given thereof.

We do also agree that we will not exchange either directly or indirectly, with any bank located and doing business as aforesaid, that shall violate or evade this agreement or any part thereof, except by and with the consent of the majority of the banks bound by the agreement, in which case this agreement shall become null and void and be no longer binding upon any of the parties hereto, and we do also agree that we will not vote for nor consent to the admission of any bank hereafter to the New York Clearing House Association until such bank shall have entered into and become bound by this agreement.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DISPUTE WITH THE CLEARING HOUSE

A second distinction of uniqueness was conferred upon the Chemical Bank in 1860. There began another and much more severe financial upheaval which lasted longer than the one of three years before; and in consequence of again living up to its nickname of "Old Bullion," the Chemical Bank was denied the privileges of the Clearing House during a period of three and a half months. This unprecedented situation was a result of the attempt of the Associated Banks to pool all their specie and reserve for mutual protection.

The trouble is explained by the report which a committee presented before a meeting of bank officers in the American Exchange Bank, November 27, 1860:

The committee appointed to wait upon the two banks which were not represented at the meeting of bank officers held on the 21st of November and to invite their concurrence in the agreement then entered into by all the other banks in the City of New York for the relief of the business community by the extension of loans and discounts and for the purpose of facilitating the settlement of exchanges between the banks, first called on the president of

the Mercantile Bank, who very promptly and cordially agreed to enter into the agreement. They then waited on the president of the Chemical Bank, and extended him the same invitation. He replied that he would be willing to adopt that portion of the agreement that related to the settlement of the exchanges at the Clearing House by means of loan certificates, but positively declined to participate otherwise in the arrangement. Your committee urged his compliance by all reasonable consideration, but without avail.

Very respectfully submitted by

GEO. S. COE,	} Committee.
A. V. STOUT,	
JAS. GALLATIN,	

What a disturbance this report created can be judged by the unanimous and immediate adoption of the following preamble and resolution by the bankers assembled:

*Whereas:* The banks of the City of New York, as a measure of relief to the business community in a time of great financial distress, have adopted an agreement for mutual support and protection, and in so doing, in consideration of great good to be accomplished, have yielded whatever advantages of position any of them may have possessed over the others; and, *Whereas*, this agreement has been approved and entered upon by every bank in the City of New York with the single exception of the Chemical Bank; and, *Whereas*, that bank will share equally with the others in the benefits arising from the measures adopted; and, *Whereas*, this agreement in its practical operations so af-

fects the details of the Clearing House as to render an exceptional case greatly annoying and inconvenient; and, *Whereas*, there is no obligation of duty, which has moved the great body of bank officers in this trying emergency, which does not bear equally upon the bank in question, therefore,

*Resolved:* That, while we hold its officers personally in high esteem, a proper official self-respect requires that, after allowing that bank time for further consideration, we should, unless they unite with us, withhold from it the ordinary interchange of business, and we therefore agree that after Saturday, the 1st day of December next, no bank which is a party to the agreement will receive on deposit or in payment of notes, at its counter, checks drawn on the Chemical Bank, and that no check on that bank will be collected by either of us through the Clearing House.

*Resolved:* That a copy of this preamble and resolution be sent by the secretary to the Chemical Bank.

The boycott, as it were, against the Chemical continued from November 27th of 1860 until March 15th of the next year, when the Clearing House reconsidered its vote of suspension of privileges.

A curious chapter of history! and an extraordinary bank — the only one ever discriminated against by the Clearing House simply because of a difference of opinion on a question of financial policy!

As to public opinion, that varied. There was some condemnation of the Chemical, but there



was also a strong feeling that its standard had been raised even higher, that it was entitled to rank as a safer and more wisely managed institution than ever.

A curious light on the opinion of the day is thrown by "a stockholder of seven banks but not of the Chemical," in his letter to a daily paper of December 4, 1860:

The stockholders of other banks do not understand the wisdom of the gratuitous advertising of the Chemical. The credit of this bank is high enough without any assistance, and we cannot understand why the public should be informed by the Associated Bank Presidents that this is the only bank in New York which felt sure of its ability to sustain itself and collect its assets promptly, no matter how severe the pressure or intense the panic.

A practical explanation was offered by the *Journal of Commerce* on December 5, 1860:

The fact is, simply, that the Chemical Bank, occupying a very strong position, in its assets, both as regards specie and bills receivable, declined to join the other banks in their arrangement for mutual aid and protection made two weeks or more since and has therefore been excluded from the Clearing House. Its bills are not taken on deposit nor its certified checks recognized at other banks. This does not appear to disturb the Chemical much, and it replies in classic language:



CHEMICAL BANK — 270 BROADWAY



Banished the House! What's banished but set free from daily contact with the things I loathe!

After all, people's confidence in the safety of a bank can hardly be disputed if they leave money in it. The Chemical's deposits on June 30, 1860, were \$2,330,000. By April 27th of the next year they had grown more than 50 per cent.—to \$3,510,000. The undivided profits had increased from \$663,382 to \$719,397. Here was a ratio of net profits to capital of \$329.77 — the highest in the city.

All this within five months after the Bank had been suspended by the Clearing House!

No wonder that the stock of the Chemical had already, in 1860, reached \$425 bid, thereby commanding the highest price of any bank stock in New York City.

A generation ago the Bank was less of an institution than it is to-day. During a period of war and disturbance there was naturally fear of entrusting one's savings to any institution. In spite of this, the Chemical was able to continue its dividends of 24 per cent. throughout the war period.

The employees of the Bank were not forgotten in this prosperity. All of the staff who enlisted in the army received regular salaries and found their old positions awaiting them upon their return, and the same offer was made to those clerks who were members of the National Guard at the outbreak of the Spanish War in 1898.

The changes of this epoch included the election of the cashier, George G. Williams, to the directorate March 21, 1864. He took the place of Robert L. Stuart, who declined to qualify after having been elected on March 14th, in consequence of the resignation of Bradish Johnson. Mr. Johnson's resignation had been accepted with great reluctance the October previous. On April 27th of that year (1863) James A. Roosevelt had been secured to assume the duties of Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt, his father, whose ill health had forced him to resign.

At the close of the war the directors, with President John Q. Jones, were John D. Wolfe, Robert McCoskry, James A. Roosevelt, and George G. Williams.

## CHAPTER IX

### HUNDRED PER CENT. DIVIDENDS THROUGH THE PANIC OF 1873

The directors of the Chemical Bank thought favorably of the opportunity to extend their activities which was created by the passage of the National Currency Act of 1864. They announced on June 9, 1865, that it was "expedient to change the organization to that of an institution to be organized under the laws of the United States." Here is the resolution upon the Bank's minutes of the same day:

*Resolved:* That the Chemical Bank, in becoming a National Banking Association under the act of Congress entitled "An Act to provide a National Currency secured by a pledge of United States bonds and to provide for the circulation and redemption thereof" — approved June 3, 1864 — hereby consents and agrees to waive the rights of said Bank to circulation in excess of one third the amount of its capital under the present laws limiting the entire circulation of national banks to three hundred million of dollars.

Provided that this agreement shall not prejudice the rights of the Bank under any subsequent legislation whereby the limit of circulation

may be extended or prevent any subsequent agreement with the Comptroller of the Currency which circumstances may render practicable.

Approved by the Board.

The new charter was secured and dated August 1st. Fifteen days later the new Board held its first meeting, with President Jones and Directors Wolfe and Williams present. A month later the customary quarterly dividend of 6 per cent. was declared, together with the Government tax.

The first election of a Chemical Bank president to the presidency of the New York Clearing House took place in October. The Associated Banks then numbered fifty-five. Five years later, when Mr. Jones was elected for the last time, the organization included seventy-one banks.

The closing years of Mr. Jones's life and activities as the Chemical's head yield a chronicle of uninterrupted advance in its prosperity. The stock, which had been \$300 bid in 1861, rose to \$500 bid and \$600 asked in January, 1866, and to \$800 in 1868. The profits, in January of 1866, were \$1,113,314; two years later they were \$1,839,079; and in 1871, \$2,357,000 — the deposits passing the five-million-dollar mark.

As a remarkable example of successful banking on a capital of \$300,000, there was public reference to the Bank's statement of March 18, 1871. The deposits were \$6,081,515, and the loans only \$4,271,918. Undivided profits were \$1,272,000, and the surplus fund was \$1,000,000.

More and more attention was constantly being directed to the extraordinary success of the Bank. On January 5, 1875, the *Boston Post* commented on the rise of the stock in ten years from \$400 to \$1,500 a share, as follows:

The Chemical is a close corporation. It issues no bills. It makes no flourish of trumpets, but what is better, it makes money. The old alchemists sought the art of turning baser metals into gold, but it never reached success. The Chemical Bank, however, must have learned the secret, for its shares, which once were quoted at \$100, now bring fifteen times that price. Mr. Jones certainly must have found the philosopher's stone.

Again the personnel of the directors changed: In May, 1867, Mr. Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt, having recovered his health, resumed the place that Mr. James A. Roosevelt had been holding. The loss of one of the most valued directors who had served continuously for twenty-three years occurred in the death of Robert McCoskry. Mr. James A. Roosevelt was secured to fill the vacancy, the meeting for that purpose being held at the residence of Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt, Broadway and Fourteenth Street. The last-named gentleman again found the strain of his position too much for his health, and two years later Mr. John H. Adam was elected in his place. In 1871 Mr. Adam gave way to Mr. Frederic W. Stevens.

An exploit of private enterprise which proved of public service was performed by the Chemical



Bank during the panic of 1873. Its dividend had been increased from 24 to 36 per cent. in 1866, four years later to 40 per cent., and one year after that to 60 per cent. It was in 1873, when industrial depression, public consternation, and financial ruin had plunged the entire nation into gloom, that a veritable beacon-light of returning confidence was cast upon the land with the Chemical Bank's declaration of a dividend at the unprecedented proportion of 100 per cent. — a fitting deed for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bank's founding through the old Chemical Manufacturing Company!

From Statement of December 31, 1872:

Capital . . . . .	\$300,000
Surplus . . . . .	1,000,000
Profit and Loss . . . . .	1,820,000
	<hr/>
Deposits . . . . .	\$5,500,000

Price of stock \$1,200.

The attainment of such splendid results in so short a period stands, it is believed, without parallel in banking history. It was therefore with pride and amidst public admiration that President John Quentin Jones prepared to enter upon the year 1878, his thirty-fourth in the Bank's service. On Saturday, December 28th, he remained at the Bank attending to business as usual until three o'clock in the afternoon. But he was suddenly attacked by a fatal illness, and closed his busy and useful life on the first day of the new year —

the oldest bank president in term of office in the city. The next morning a tribute was paid to his achievements and himself by the following article in the New York *World*:

The fact that the Chemical Bank did not suspend specie payments either in the panic of 1857 or in the general disaster of 1861, and that it continued to redeem its pledges in gold for twelve years after the Government had begun to dishonor the demand notes of the nation, is more eloquent than columns of rhetoric in rebuke of the hand-to-mouth politicians who are perpetually juggling with the public faith and credit in the interest of their own miserable political schemes.

When he is confronted with a business enterprise which has prospered for more than a generation, which has increased the value of its capital stock sixteen fold, which has displayed greater sensitiveness and a finer sense of honor in dealing with its creditors than the nation itself, and which holds the foremost place in the confidence of the people of New York to-day and stands as one of the few unshaken landmarks among the drifting currents and fluctuating tides of financial speculation, not even Bland himself will have the hardihood to deny that it is in the best and broadest sense a success.

From the beginning, the managers of this Bank acted on the principle that the first duty of a bank, as of a man in business, is to be honest, sound, and strong; and that the only true source of a real financial prosperity is to be sought in the well-deserved confidence of the public.

We may apply to them the language of Words-

worth in regard to the great architects of the middle ages, they dreamt not of a perishable bank. They looked upon a bank as a machine for the safe investment of capital and not a patent invention for pumping the money of Peter into the speculations of Paul. The late president of the institution did more probably than any other man in the direction to shape its course and keep it steady on the track of sound financial principles.

## CHAPTER X

### A QUARTER CENTURY OF PROSPERITY UNDER GEORGE G. WILLIAMS

On the second day of the year 1878 the Chemical National Bank elected as president a man who had already been a factor in its growth for thirty-six years, and who was destined to lead it during twenty-five more to such a point of resources and power as could hardly have been conceived at the time of his election, even by George G. Williams himself.

The quarter century ending in 1903 brought to our country an industrial growth such as the world had never beheld before. A new South had risen from the ashes of the old, to become an active competitor of the North in commerce and manufacture. The methods of the industrial world became immeasurably more rapid and labor saving. In the West, thousands of miles of new railroads opened up homes for millions of new settlers. Every wave of prosperity brought new corporations and trust companies, of capitalization larger than the former age could have imagined possible.

Yet there were setbacks for the nation, particularly in 1881, 1884, 1890 and 1893; and the tri-

umph of President Williams's career was that in the case of his chosen enterprise there was no such word as failure, nor even any interruption of steady growth.

The methods by which he brought to his bank its share of the national prosperity were regulated by the old-school principles of the presidents who had gone before him — John Mason and John Q. Jones.

It is interesting in this connection to note that the bank statement on July 3, 1886, showed a total reserve of the Associated Banks of New York City of \$11,021,450, and of this \$6,395,200 was held by the Chemical National Bank.

It was difficult for strangers to realize the strong influence of Mr. Williams's vigorous personality upon the financial world — his methods were so opposed to the nervous, short-cut style of the modern age. The president's and cashier's rooms were always open. Callers had but to look to tell whether the heads of the Bank were in. Every visitor was courteously received. "It is the invariable rule of the Chemical Bank," once declared President Williams, "that every employee, from the humblest clerk to the highest official, shall be courteous to every one. If I could speak twenty languages, I'd preach politeness in them all. I speak in praise of politeness out of the experience of fifty-nine years in the banking business."

The absence of sensationalism, the quietness

that was one of the strongest personal characteristics of Mr. Williams, are the subject of the following paragraph from *Leslie's Weekly* of October 4, 1894:

Because the president of the Chemical is older and wiser than some of the Wall Street bankers who lend the bulk of their money on "cats and dogs" of the Stock Exchange, they call him "Papa Williams." But, if any of the modern bankers who pay interest on country bank balances, while the Chemical pays no interest, want to test President Williams's vigor, they will find him ready every morning and evening. He fairly sprints from his home each morning and walks back at night when he gets through his business, which, sometimes, is as late as eight o'clock. There are no Chinese lantern illuminations about his business methods, but he has as much fame as those who advertise themselves continually either through their assumption of civility or their lack of it.

The keen vision of Mr. Williams was called into the service not only of the Chemical Bank but of the community as president of the Clearing House Association. During the money crisis of 1893 and the year that followed he found it impossible to escape the attention due to the executive head of so important a body at so portentous a crisis.

It was the Loan Committee of the Associated Banks appointed by him that came to the front in June, 1893, with a unanimous vote for the issuance of Clearing House certificates. Mr. Williams

afterward declared that the case was one of necessity that admits of no rule, just as during the Civil War, when the banks were unable to carry the war loans.

"During those trying times," Mr. Williams stated on his retiring from the Clearing House presidency in 1894, "the one conspicuous object looked to for relief, aside from Congress, was the New York Clearing House."

Again, during the "sound money" agitation of 1896, the influence of the Chemical Bank and of its president was vigorously thrown toward the maintenance of the gold standard. Before the Monetary Commission in Washington Mr. Williams, during the next year, repeated his frequent statements of the past, that silver circulation should be maintained beyond question on a parity with gold. His conviction was so firm that he declared Congress ought to pass an act ruling that the word "coin" on all United States bonds should be interpreted "gold."

The seizure of every legitimate means for the financial development of the Chemical Bank enabled President Williams, in 1888, ten years after his election, to declare a dividend unparalleled in the banking history of the world — 150 per cent. payable bi-monthly. The amount has been maintained without change up to the time this history closes, though the rate per share was of course changed when the capital was increased from \$300,000 to \$3,000,000 in 1907.

The rise in the price of the stock was extraordinary. It had advanced from \$2,200 in 1884 to \$4,000 in 1888. A contemporary notice of bank stock sales ran as follows:

That fat-laden article, Chemical Bank stock, waddled out into sight long enough to sell itself to the extent of ten shares. The Bank is a phenomenon for which the commercial world has no match. Of \$23,269,000 deposits, about \$18,000,000 is individual deposits. It is the Bank of the Vanderbilts, Goelets, Lenoxes, and Kennedys. It is the Bank of the Gods, the Olympus of Broadway.

The records show that twenty shares were sold in January of the next year at \$4,195, and in November at \$4,500. Finally, on April 30, 1895, came the high record for this and for all other bank stocks in the world up to that time, two shares being sold on the Real Estate Exchange at the price per share of \$4,900.

Of the men at President Williams's right hand during this astonishing growth there was first of all William J. Quinlan, the cashier, who took the position when Mr. Williams was elected president, and Jacob C. Parsons, who was appointed second vice-president on February 2, 1898.

The first directors of President Williams's régime were, besides himself, James A. Roosevelt (elected vice-president May 12, 1890), Frederic W. Stevens, Robert L. Kennedy, who succeeded John D. Wolfe at the latter's death in 1872, and Robert Goelet.



On January 1, 1899, for the first time in the history of the Chemical Bank, it secured the services of an active vice-president. Little by little burdens had been heaped upon the head of the president beyond the physical powers of any one man. Therefore Mr. Williams called William H. Porter, his trusted friend, and one of the youngest banking men in the city, from the vice-presidency of the Chase National Bank, on January 1st. At the same time Mr. Porter was elected director, whereby the Board was made to consist of six instead of five members.

For a little less than four years and a half Mr. Williams and Mr. Porter shared their duties. About the beginning of May, 1903, Mr. Williams's almost daily visits to the Bank had to cease and he was confined to his home at 34 West Fifty-eighth Street. His advanced age—seventy-seven—rendered him unable to resist the attacks of a swift illness; and on the 7th of May he ended his earthly career of such splendid achievement.

A tribute to the rare confidence felt by the directors in his judgment was the permission, of which Mr. Williams had availed himself, to name not only his own assistant during the closing years of his own activity, but also his successor in the presidency. According to his wishes, the directors, at their meeting on May 11th, after adopting resolutions in memory of their departed president and leader, elected William H. Porter the head of



CARVED PEDIMENT  
ON THE RAILING IN THE OLD BANK



OLD-TIME LOCK



the Chemical National Bank, being the sixth president in its eighty years of existence.

Throughout the entire country, wherever there were men who realized the benefit to the nation of Mr. Williams's sound example and his fight for sound money, the grief was intense at the news of his death, which occurred within a few days of the death of Frederick D. Tappen, an intimate associate of Mr. Williams in the fight for sound money. Following is one of the many tributes paid at the time:

Mr. Williams was a great banker without being in the least sensational. The removal of two such men as Mr. Tappen and Mr. Williams is an almost incalculable loss to sound banking in the United States. Mr. Williams's quiet performance of the task of managing one of the most successful and profitable banks in the entire world was calculated to speak for itself and to indicate to every one who studied the situation the difference between sober, scientific banking and the so-called up-to-date, speculative banking.

After an administration characterized by conservatism, energy, and a broad intelligence in the handling of its affairs, Mr. William H. Porter tendered his resignation as president in December, 1910, to accept a partnership in the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co. During the twelve years of his connection with the bank the institution continued its usual rate of growth, and the surplus

and undivided profits at the time of his retirement were \$6,500,000.

His successor was Mr. J. B. Martindale, the present head of the Bank, who had entered its service as a junior clerk in May, 1878. He had been appointed assistant cashier on December 24, 1902, vice-president in January, 1907, and on the resignation of Mr. Porter was elected to the position of president.

At the time of going to press the officers of the Bank are as follows:

J. B. MARTINDALE, President.

H. K. TWITCHELL, Vice-President.

FRANCIS HALPIN, Cashier.

JAS. L. PARSON, Assistant Cashier.

EDWARD H. SMITH, Assistant Cashier.

The present directors are:

FREDERIC W. STEVENS,

AUGUSTUS D. JUILLIARD,

HENRY P. DAVISON,

CHARLES CHENEY,

W. EMLÉN ROOSEVELT,

ROBERT WALTON GOELET,

WILLIAM H. PORTER,

JOS. B. MARTINDALE,

HERBERT K. TWITCHELL

Mr. Twitchell, who had been assistant cashier in the Chase National Bank, was appointed to the same position in the Chemical Bank on January 9, 1907, and appointed vice-president on January 9, 1911. Mr. Halpin, who entered the Bank in 1869, was appointed assistant cashier in 1890, and cashier, on the resignation of Mr. W. J. Quinlan, on February 1, 1898. Mr. James L. Parson, whose



STRONG BOX OF 1850



OLD-TIME PADLOCK



connection with the Bank dates back to 1874, was appointed assistant cashier February 16, 1898, and Mr. Smith, who came from the firm of Kountze Bros. to the Bank in May, 1883, was appointed assistant cashier January 9, 1907.

Thus, the present administration of the Chemical National Bank, trained under the former heads of the institution, has taken as its example in the conduct of the Bank's affairs such men as John Mason, John Quentin Jones, George G. Williams, William H. Porter, and others to whom the Chemical to-day owes its position in the world of finance.





**PART II**

**MEN OF THE CHEMICAL BANK**







JOHN MASON

## CHAPTER I

JOHN MASON, 1774 - 1839

IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHEMICAL BANK 1831-1839

The subject of this sketch was a prominent figure in the commercial life of New York during the early part of the last century. A typical self-made man of the old school, he built up by his own efforts a fortune which was considered munificent in those days.

Financial power, however, never sullied his innate modesty and kindly disposition. After his death many in the lowlier walks of life rose up to add their tribute to his memory, in appreciation of the sympathy and help given in times of need. One, who had evidently enjoyed intimate friendship with Mr. Mason, contributed to a daily paper, shortly after his decease, this pleasing picture of his thoughtfulness for others:

When some time since, a great number of poor, forlorn emigrants were cast upon our shores and various impediments, for various causes, were contrived to prevent or retard their admission to this country of their adoption and their choice, John Mason stepped forward and by a liberal donation contributed to soften the rigor of their destiny

and to convince them that in this boasted land of liberty there was one feeling heart to appreciate their distress and administer to their comfort. Since then he has repeatedly told the writer of this article that as God had blessed him with abundance, he considered it his bounden duty to alleviate the distress of his fellow beings, and entreated that when circumstances occurred where his means might be useful he might be applied to. On a late occasion, after his return from the Virginia Springs, on the writer's telling him of a promising youth who required patronage and pecuniary assistance in furtherance of his education, his reply was: "Call on me when you come to town, and we will see what can be done."

Little is known of Mr. Mason's early life beyond the fact that he was born in Taunton, Mass., in 1774.

The New York *Transcript* published a series of memoirs of prominent New Yorkers, in 1836, and its character sketch of John Mason can hardly be improved upon:

He began life as a poor boy and by the dint of his own exertions became a man of influence, standing, and wealth. There is, we are sorry to say, a false shame among some individuals inducing them to blush for the means by which they acquired their wealth and exposing them to the ridicule of those who know their origin and laugh at them for their absurdity in concealing it. The subject of this memoir is not one of them and, although moving in the good society of the city, his modesty and good sense never allow him to be







wanting in that self-respect in which those are deficient who look back upon their former respectable avocations with regret or who are annoyed by any allusions to them. On the contrary, he abounds in anecdotes respecting his early years and delights to indulge in reminiscences of the events by which they were characterized.

John Mason's name first appears in the New York Directory for the year 1796, when the firm of Mason & Sharp is mentioned as a "dry goods store, 80 William Street, cor. Maiden Lane." The following year John Mason's name appears alone as "merchant, 208 Broadway." In 1798 he moved to 84 William Street, remaining there until 1800, when he returned to his former locality at 80 William Street. He stayed there until 1804, when the firm of Mason & Smedes was formed at 178 Pearl Street. The partner was Abraham K. Smedes, but in 1809 the latter's name ceases to appear, and in 1810 the firm is John Mason & Co., still at the same place.

By this time Mr. Mason had risen to be one of the acknowledged leaders of those worthies now reverently referred to as "the old New York merchants." The first mention of his residence at 337 Broadway, between Worth (then Anthony) and Leonard streets, is found in the Directory of 1811. This was one of the fashionable residential localities, and for neighbors Mr. Mason had several of the wealthiest merchants in the city. Next door, at 339, lived B. C. Minturn, of the big

shipping firm Grinnell, Minturn & Co., and later the same house was occupied by John G. Warren, a leading Wall Street broker. Just below, at 335, lived Myndert Van Schaick, of the old John Hone & Sons firm. Others in the block were Thomas Stagg, Jr., John H. Howland, Robert Troup, James Heard, William Denning and Jacob Le Roy.

Although the War of 1812 occasioned severe losses to many merchants, they aided the Government liberally. It reads strangely to-day that the United States Government had a hard time in securing a \$16,000,000 loan authorized by Congress early in 1813. When, after considerable delay, it was learned that less than \$4,000,000 had been subscribed for, the merchants of the city got together, as they have on so many occasions when financial aid has been needed either in or out of the country, and in a short time the whole amount was taken up. John Mason was one of the active workers in this patriotic endeavor, and his name is on the list for \$5,000. Isaac Jones, the successor of Mr. Mason as the Chemical Bank's president, took \$4,000 of the bonds.

The Mason and Jones families were related both by business and family ties. It is little wonder that, in its early years, the Chemical Bank appears somewhat in the light of a family enterprise. Three of John Mason's daughters married members of the Jones family, Mary and Serena becoming the wives of two brothers, Isaac

and George Jones respectively, both of whom were directors in the Bank, while the former succeeded his father-in-law as president. Sarah Mason, sister of John Mason, married Isaac Jones, Sr., and became mother of John Q. Jones. Rebecca Mason married Isaac Colford Jones, a cousin of Isaac and George Jones. Another daughter, Sarah, became the wife of A. Gordon Hamersley, who was a large stockholder in the Bank.

Up to 1819 there was no savings bank in the city of New York. The first meeting for the establishment of such a necessary institution was held late in 1816, by a number of officers of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism. John Pintard, Thomas Eddy, and John Murray, Jr., were among its most earnest advocates, but for some time they had to encounter objections, both in and out of the Legislature. In 1819, however, success crowned their efforts, and on July 3d of that year, Saturday evening at six o'clock, the bank opened its doors, occupying a modest little room in the basement of the New York Institution, then standing in the rear of the City Hall, fronting on Chambers Street. The sum of \$2,807 was deposited that evening, \$300 being the largest individual deposit and \$2 the smallest. John Mason was one of the original trustees of the bank, and he was present on the opening night.

His enthusiastic and active participation in the affairs of the New York & Harlem Railroad marks

him as one of the pioneers in New York rapid transit. The company was incorporated on April 25, 1831, with a capital of \$350,000, which was soon increased to \$500,000. Campbell P. White was the first president, and John Mason the treasurer. Mr. White, soon after, was elected to Congress, and at the directors' meeting in August, 1832, John Mason was chosen president. John Lozier was vice-president, A. C. Rainetaux secretary, and among the directors were Samuel Swartwout, Isaac Adriance, Henry Ogden, Alexander Hosack, Samuel B. Ruggles, Thomas Addis Emmet, and John R. Peters.

On February 25, 1832, ground was broken for the railroad. The spot selected was a rocky section of Murray Hill, in Fourth Avenue. The rock having been bored, thirteen blasts were set off with true patriotic ardor. John Mason made a speech which is said to have been received with great cheering, although Philip Hone remarks, in his diary, that "Mr. Mason could make money better than he could make a speech."

The *American Railroad Journal*, started in 1831, and the first paper in this country devoted solely to railroad interests, in commenting on the events of the day, said:

Thus commences a single link in that great chain of internal improvements which is to reach from New York to Buffalo and which, without fatigue and at moderate expense, will convey our citizens to Albany in a few hours.





Meanwhile, a line of track was being laid on the Bowery from Prince Street to Fourteenth Street. On November 14, 1832, this was opened for traffic with great éclat. Two cars, drawn by horses, made the trip. The car in the van, which had as guests Mayor Walter Bowne and other municipal worthies, bore the name of "John Mason."

A contemporary account of this first railroad trip in New York City will doubtless be interesting. The following, which describes the cars somewhat more in detail than others, is from the *New York Courier and Inquirer* of November 15, 1832:

The Mayor, corporation, etc., left in carriages to the depot near Union Square, where two splendid cars, each with two horses, were in waiting. These cars are made low with broad iron wheels which fit the flanges of the railroad after an improved model from the Liverpool and Manchester cars. They resemble an omnibus, or, rather, several omnibuses attached to each other, padded with fine cloth and handsome glass windows, each capable of containing, outside and inside, full forty passengers. The company was soon seated and the horses trotted off in handsome style with great ease at the rate of about twelve miles an hour, followed by a number of private barouches and horsemen. Groups of spectators greeted the passengers of the cars with shouts and every window in the Bowery was filled. The distance was not far from the old residence farm of Governor Stuyvesant. Those who made violent objections to laying down these tracks, and fancied a thousand



dangers to the passing traveler, now look at the work with pleasure and surprise.

The statement is also made that upon the completion of the road "it will make Harlem the suburb of New York."

Several interesting letters appeared in the New York *Evening Post* in 1858 signed "Retired Merchant." They dealt chiefly with real estate matters, and the writer cites the fact that in 1821 the owner of the plot of ground bounded by Third and Fourth avenues, Fifty-fifth and Fifty-sixth streets, offered it to John Mason for \$100 an acre. There were about six acres and Mr. Mason declined to give more than \$500, and the sale was not effected.

At the time of his death, the immediate cause of which was heart disease, Mr. Mason was living at 640 Broadway, where he had moved from his lower Broadway home two years before. He was sixty-six years of age and had attended to his duties at the Bank up to a few days preceding his fatal illness. The funeral was held from his late residence on Sunday afternoon, September 29th.

The property left by Mr. Mason included many Broadway and other "downtown" parcels, and also eight blocks of Fifth Avenue property, extending through to Fourth Avenue from Fifty-fourth to Sixty-third Street with the exception of the block between Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh streets, Fourth and Fifth avenues. Three large

plots in this section, each 200 by 920 feet, Mr. Mason purchased in 1823 from the city for \$2,500. They are described in the old deed as fronting on Middle Road, now Fifth Avenue.

#### JOHN MASON PROPERTY

Eight blocks, from Fifty-fourth to Sixty-third Street, and Fourth to Fifth avenues, except block between Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh streets and same avenues.

Broadway, Nos. 337, 632, 636, 638, 640, and 45 feet front on southeast corner Broadway and Fourth Street.

Bowery, Nos. 21 and 126.

James Street, No. 92.

Cherry Street, Nos. 57 and 66.

Division Street, Nos. 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84.

Pearl Street, No. 178.

Gore of land southwest corner Lafayette Place and Fourth Street. As partitioned 1854.

This property, owing to litigation over the will of John Mason, remained in the hands of the executors until 1854. By that time the property had increased enormously in value and the heirs found themselves much better off than would have been the case had the estate been divided in 1839. The Mason, Jones, and Hamersley families were the chief participants in the final settlement. The court appointed as commissioners in the partition Luther Bradish, Thomas Addis Emmet, and Anthony J. Bleecker.

In commenting upon John Mason's death, the *Commercial Advertiser* of September 28, 1839, had this to say:

Mr. Mason had so long occupied a prominent station in the business interests of New York that his departure from among us calls for something more than a simple announcement. He ranked among our wealthiest citizens, having retired several years since from active participation in commercial affairs with a large fortune gained by his own industry and economy, first in mechanical and afterward in mercantile employment. He was upright in character, simple and unostentatious in demeanor, never forgetting that the riches he possessed constituted no merit and that his title to praise was in the use he made of them.





JOHN QUENTIN JONES

## CHAPTER II

JOHN QUENTIN JONES, 1803-1878

IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHEMICAL BANK 1834-1878

John Q. Jones was born in New York City in 1803. The name Quentin reveals the Huguenot extraction of the family, the early form being Quereau, which in later years became contracted into Carow. Isaac Carow, president of the New York Chamber of Commerce in 1840, was a member of the same family. John Q. Jones entered Columbia College, but did not remain long enough to graduate with his class, the commercial spirit of his family drawing him away within a year or two into active business life. He took a position in the mercantile house of Lawrence & Trimble, and in 1833 he appears in the New York Directory as a merchant at 216 Washington Street, while his residence was at 48 Hudson Street.

In 1834 he was appointed factory agent of the Chemical Bank, a position that was maintained up to the expiration of the charter of the Chemical Manufacturing Company. With the death of Mr. Mason, in 1839, Mr. Jones became cashier of the Bank under the presidency of his cousin, Isaac Jones. In 1844, when he himself succeeded to the

presidency, upon the granting of a new charter, he moved his city residence to 60 Hudson Street, where he lived until 1849, when he purchased his country home on Staten Island and spent a large part of his time there until he again took up a more permanent city residence at 246 Fifth Avenue.

Mr. Jones's bachelor life, his dislike for ostentation, and his unremitting attention to the affairs of the Chemical Bank caused him, long before he could properly be termed old, to be styled a man of unusually methodical habits. It was, however, this strict adherence to business, combined with a rare judgment and sagacity in financial affairs, that enabled him to witness the growth of the Bank from a non-dividend paying institution in 1844, when he became its president, to one paying 100 per cent. dividends, while the original one-hundred-dollar shares had risen to a value of \$1,600 shortly before his death.

During his successful and active life Mr. Jones had the assistance as well as the influence of some of the wealthiest and most conservative business men in the city, men such as C. V. S. Roosevelt, Peter Goelet, Robert Goelet, John David Wolfe, Robert McCoskry, Joseph Sampson, James A. Roosevelt, R. L. Stuart, and A. T. Stewart, some of whom were at different times directors of the Bank.

The honor of the Clearing House presidency fell to Mr. Jones in 1865. He served for six

years. He had already been a member of the Committee on Admission, 1854-1859.

During the last thirty years of Mr. Jones's life it was a subject of general comment that his daily rounds were conducted with the regularity of clockwork. Promptly at 9:30 in the morning he would enter his office at the Chemical Bank, where he would remain until noon, when he would walk down to Wall Street and visit Ludlow Thomas, one of his closest friends. Shortly after three o'clock he would return to the Bank office, and, after finishing the business of the day, he would go to his Fifth Avenue house to dine. Here, at the southwest corner of Twenty-eighth Street, he lived practically *alone* for the last two years of his life. Among his associates he was very companionable, and could tell a good story and laugh heartily over the humor in another's tale.

In early life he was a keen sportsman and owned a number of fine hunting dogs.

Until Mr. Jones became so deeply engrossed in business affairs, said the New York *World* a few days after his death, he had been quite celebrated as a sportsman in the true sense of the word. He was almost passionately fond of gunning, and not a season passed without his making several excursions to his hunting grounds. One morning he would be shooting snipe in New Jersey marshes and a few days later the crack of his rifle would be echoing among the Adirondack Mountains or the wooded hills of Connecticut. In these sports he was usually accompanied by his brothers



Charles and Joshua, neither of whom could come up to him either in searching for game or bringing it down and bagging it when found. His dogs were of the finest breeds and always thoroughly trained. In those days he would roam over mountains and wade through marshes, utterly regardless of physical comfort or anything else but the game he was pursuing. Whatever he did was done thoroughly and never by halves. As a business man he was methodical, cautious, and untiring; as a banker, conservative, farseeing, and confident. Wherever he made an investment the most substantial securities were required.

The only public office that Mr. Jones ever consented to accept was as a member of the second commission to widen Broadway between Thirty-fourth and Fifty-ninth streets. This he accepted chiefly upon the earnest solicitation of his friend Alexander T. Stewart. His fees amounted to between \$8,000 and \$10,000, but the entire amount he returned to the city, receiving Comptroller Andrew H. Greene's receipt for the sum. He was a member of St. Paul's Church, owning a pew there which had belonged to his father. At one time he was elected a vestryman of Trinity, but this he declined. At the time of his death he was a director in the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, the Eagle Fire Insurance Company, and the Pennsylvania Coal Company.

"Not only the Chemical Bank but all the financial interests of New York sustain a severe loss in his death," was the statement of one who



MIDDLE DUTCH CHURCH  
AFTERWARD USED AS NEW YORK POST OFFICE



QUILL PEN USED BY J. Q. JONES



knew the wide influence exerted by Mr. Jones in the financial world.

Mr. Jones died in his Fifth Avenue residence on Tuesday night, January 1, 1878, closing a busy, useful life of seventy-four years. On the previous Saturday he had been at the Bank attending to business as usual, remaining until three o'clock in the afternoon. Funeral services were held Friday morning, January 4th, in Trinity Chapel, Twenty-fifth Street. The pallbearers were George G. Williams, Frederic W. Stevens, Henry Parish, Ludlow Thomas, Abraham M. Proudfit, James A. Roosevelt, Robert Goelet, and Robert L. Kennedy. Nearly every city bank president was present at the funeral and the financial institutions of the city were practically all represented. The body of Mr. Jones was interred in the Jones family vault in St. Luke's churchyard in Hudson Street.

"When such a man dies," said one of the numerous contemporary notices of his life, "it is well that the community should turn aside from gaping over the noisy conflicts of cheap politicians and ostentatious speculators, to rekindle in the light of a career so unobtrusive yet so successful something of the old faith in the slow but sure processes of intelligent integrity and something of the old reverence for the policy of honesty in public and in private affairs."

Mr. Jones at the time of his death was the oldest bank president in term of office in the city. For nearly thirty-four years he had directed the affairs

of the Chemical. The directors met immediately after the loss of their president and adopted these resolutions:

*Resolved:* That in the death of our honored president, John Q. Jones, we lose a friend whose upright honesty and unselfish life have endeared him to us.

*Resolved:* That, as representatives of this institution, we have to regret the death of an officer whose life and energy were devoted to making the position of the bank most enviable through his great financial ability, unswerving honesty and high regard for its duties and responsibilities.





GEORGE G. WILLIAMS

## CHAPTER III

GEORGE G. WILLIAMS, 1826 - 1903

IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHEMICAL BANK 1842-1903

Even a brief record of the life of George G. Williams would be in large part a history of the Chemical Bank itself. Brought up amid the old-fashioned but eminently safe business principles advocated and pursued by its founders, Mr. Williams, during his sixty-one years of service, beginning as a clerk at sixteen years of age, never forgot that a bank is the custodian of other people's property. To his conservatism was added a keen business vision which enabled him to take advantage of every legitimate means for the financial development of the institution to which he gave the labor of the greater part of his life.

Mr. Williams's life was as free from sensationalism as was his career as a banker. His family were among the early settlers of New England, the first member to come to this country being Robert Williams, who settled at Roxbury and was admitted as a freeman in 1638. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, and William Williams, one of the signers of the Declaration of Indepen-



dence from Connecticut, were illustrious members of the same family.

George G. Williams was born October 9, 1826, in East Haddam, Conn., one of the historic towns of that state, where Nathan Hale, the martyr spy of the Revolution, first taught school after his graduation from Yale. His father, Dr. Datus Williams, was a physician of prominence, and for years had enjoyed the friendship of the Jones family. An invalid brother of John Q. Jones was obliged to spend some time in East Haddam for his health. He became greatly attached to the doctor's son and besought the father to allow his boy to enter upon a business career in New York. Although somewhat reluctant at first, as young Williams was then a student in Brainard Academy preparing for college, Doctor Williams finally consented, and in 1842 George entered upon his duties as a clerk in the Chemical Bank. A bond of \$3,000 was given for the proper and honest performance of his duties. The original document, dated April 28, 1842, signed by Dr. Datus Williams and several relatives, with a bright red stamp opposite each name, is one of the memorials of early days still preserved by the Bank, as is also his first salary receipt.

The new clerk evinced marked aptitude in his duties, and by patient and careful attention to his work earned the esteem of his employers. In 1848 he was rewarded by being made paying teller, an important position for one but twenty

years of age. His salary was \$1,100. In 1850, owing to illness, Mr. Williams was obliged to seek rest and recreation for several months, and Jacob Cox Parsons, who entered the Bank the previous year as receiving teller, became paying teller. On his return to the Bank Mr. Williams was made discount clerk, holding that position until 1855, when, upon the death of Mr. Desdoity, he was appointed cashier. Nine years later, in 1864, Mr. Williams was elected a director of the Bank. In 1878 he began his quarter-century term as president.

The important events of the years 1892 to 1894 had elevated Mr. Williams to that position popularly styled "a public man." As president of the Clearing House Association during the money crisis of 1893 he appointed the famous Loan Committee, naming Frederick D. Tappen, president of the Gallatin National Bank, as its chairman. At this important meeting in June, 1893, nearly every bank in the Clearing House was represented, and the issuing of Clearing House certificates was authorized without a dissenting vote. In addressing the members, President Williams said:

"The citadel is all right, but we want to strengthen the outposts."

The Loan Committee came to the assistance nobly; and the situation had been cleared when, late in November, 1893, its duties ended.

At this time Mr. Williams was concluding his second year as president of the Clearing House.

He succeeded Mr. Tappen in 1892, and it was remarked at the time as an interesting fact that thirty-nine years before, when the association was organized, Mr. Williams was the Clearing House clerk for the Chemical Bank.

How intimate and constant were his services to the Clearing House appears from the following list of his positions there: President, 1886, 1893, 1894; member of Conference Committee, 1873, 1874, 1881, 1882, and (as chairman) 1887; member of Clearing House Committee, 1885, 1888-1890, 1892, 1895, 1896, 1898, 1899, 1901, 1902; member of Loan Committee, 1884, 1890, 1893-1895.

When Mr. Williams retired from the presidency on October 2, 1894, it was an historic day in the history of the Clearing House, being the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone for the handsome building in Cedar Street. He made an address, reciting briefly the history of the association, and, in referring to the assistance it had been enabled to give during the preceding months of financial disturbance, he said:

In seasons of panic the interests centred in this Clearing House have been united to serve the public good. To erect a barrier against the evils, Clearing House certificates have at various times been issued, resulting in each instance in diminished disturbance, restoring confidence and relieving commercial distress. They have never been resorted to except in cases of absolute necessity. These certificates have in each instance well fulfilled the purposes of their issue, notably during



NEW YORK CLEARING HOUSE



the Civil War, in enabling the banks to carry the great war loans, and again during the protracted panic of 1893, when the whole country from ocean to ocean was almost overwhelmed with financial disaster. During these trying times the one conspicuous object looked to for relief, aside from Congress, was the New York Clearing House. It boldly and successfully fulfilled its mission. The history of finance records no action of greater consequence in averting calamities arising from panics than that of this Clearing House during the past year.

In all of his personal relations of life Mr. Williams exemplified the same noble standards of honesty, faithfulness and courtesy that endeared him to all with whom he came in contact in business relations. "Faithfulness to my every duty" was his explanation one day when asked to what he attributed his success in life. His singleness of purpose, together with his courtesy toward all men, furnished a striking illustration of the truth that it is possible for a Christian gentleman to carry his ideals of Christianity with him in his business. He was an active member of St. Bartholomew's Church, being for many years a vestryman and treasurer of the church. In the parish work he always took a deep interest, and he gave generous aid to the Orphans' Home and Asylum of the Protestant Episcopal Church, which was liberally endowed by John Q. Jones and others of that family. He was also a governor and vice-president of the Lying-in-Hospital and treasurer

of the Institution for the Savings of Merchants' Clerks. His aid and counsel were sought in the management of estates of many of his departed friends, but these duties were performed so quietly that few were aware of these additional labors. Among such estates were those of John Q. Jones, Joshua Jones, Robert L. Stuart and his wife Mary Stuart, Louis C. Hamersley, Arthur N. Gifford, and Wilson G. Hunt.

He was also a director and trustee of many corporations, including the Title Guarantee and Trust Company, the Bond and Mortgage Guarantee Company, the Texas Midland Railroad Company, the Eastman Company, the Fidelity and Casualty Company, the Union Trust Company, the Mexican Telegraph Company, the United States Life Insurance Company, the Pennsylvania Coal Company, and the Eagle Fire Insurance Company.

Up to the advanced age of seventy-seven Mr. Williams continued active. But a sudden illness overtook him at his home, 34 West Fifty-eighth Street, in 1903. Within a few days, on May 7th, the long career that had meant so much to the financial and other enterprises of his city and nation had ended.

The funeral services were held on May 10th, at St. Bartholomew's Church, and the burial was at Woodlawn. All of the leading banking houses in the city were represented in this last tribute of respect to one who had been so intimately

associated with them in the financial triumphs and troubles of the city. Four directors of the Chemical Bank were among the honorary pallbearers: W. Emlen Roosevelt, Augustus D. Juilliard, George G. DeWitt, and William H. Porter.

#### JOHN DAVID WOLFE

John David Wolfe was one of New York's most prominent merchants, and at the time of his death the oldest director in point of service of the Chemical National Bank. Mr. Wolfe entered the directorate of the Bank in 1844 and remained a valued member of its Board for twenty-eight years, until his death on May 17, 1872. He was one of the largest stockholders at the Bank's rechartering in 1844, Peter Goelet, Joseph Sampson, and Mr. Wolfe each subscribing for 300 shares.

Mr. Wolfe was born in this city on July 24, 1792. His father, David Wolfe, was Assistant Quartermaster in Washington's army during a period of the Revolution. He founded the hardware firm to which the son succeeded when he retired in 1816. The business was then situated at 87 Maiden Lane. In later years Japhet Bishop became a partner, and as Wolfe & Bishop the firm ranked among the leaders in the hardware business of the city.

Mr. Wolfe married Dorothea Ann, a daughter of the first Peter Lorillard. His daughter,



Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, inherited her father's tastes for charitable and helpful deeds, but to the city at large her name is chiefly remembered for the magnificent art collection bequeathed by her to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In 1842 Mr. Wolfe retired from active business, though he still remained a director in a number of business corporations, and he devoted the greater part of his closing years to public and charitable affairs. He was one of the founders and the first president of the Museum of Natural History, holding that position at the time of his death. He was also one of the founders of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. He was president of the Prison Association of New York; vice-president of the New York Hospital; vice-president of the Hospital for the Relief of the Ruptured and Crippled; and a member of the New York Historical Society, to which he gave the valuable library of Buchanan Smith. His charitable and church interests were bounded by no narrow limitations. To the dioceses of the Episcopal Church in Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Utah, Nevada, and Oregon he was a liberal contributor. He established a diocesan school for girls at Topeka, Kan., and erected the home for the Theological Seminary at Kenyon, Col. He also gave the land for the Home for Incurables at Fordham. With Mrs. Peter Cooper he founded the Sheltering Arms Institution in this city.

For many years Mr. Wolfe was a vestryman of

Trinity Church. At the time of his death he was senior warden of Grace Church. He compiled an abbreviated form of the Book of Common Prayer for use in mission services which is still extensively used. Amid such works, to quote from a notice after his death, "thirty years of his life were passed and the genial nature of the man added greatly to the value of his benefactions, for he was a cheerful giver. Passing the whole of his long life in the city, with the exception of two or three excursions to Europe, he was one of the best known of our citizens in its social circles, where his absence will be deservedly regretted."

Mr. Wolfe at the time of his death was in his eightieth year. He was buried in Greenwood cemetery.

#### THE GOELETS

There have been actively associated in the affairs of the Chemical Bank three generations of the Goelet family — Peter Goelet, Robert Goelet, and Robert Walton Goelet. Peter Goelet, although never a director, was one of the largest stockholders when the Bank was rechartered as a state bank in 1844. For more than thirty-five years he worked as an invaluable adviser and voluntary helper in its business needs. It was said, indeed, that if he could not be found in his old-fashioned house at Broadway and Nineteenth Street, he was sure to be in the Chemical Bank

directors' room. His brother, Robert Goelet, father and grandfather of two of the directors, was also a large stockholder. Like President John Q. Jones, Peter Goelet was also a bachelor.

Peter Goelet was born June 22, 1800. His grandfather, of the same name, had been enrolled



RESIDENCE OF PETER GOELET  
CORNER OF BROADWAY AND NINETEENTH STREET

among the Sons of Liberty during the troublous Stamp Act times, and was also a member of the celebrated Committee of Correspondence and of the Committee of One Hundred. Long before the Revolution, however, he laid the foundation of his business success in his Hanover Square hard-

ware store, known far and wide as the "Sign of the Golden Key." The Coffee Exchange now occupies the site.

By no means did Peter Goelet, Sr., confine his business interests to articles of hardware. His advertisements, which appear frequently in the Colonial newspapers, show that he endeavored to supply the Knickerbocker families with the luxuries as well as the necessities of life. In many ways he was the prototype of the modern department store. He died in 1811, and his eldest son, Peter P. Goelet, succeeded to the business. An advertisement in a New York paper of February 17, 1803, gives this interesting bit of information:

For Sale, New Brick house and lot, 63 Water Street, at present occupied by Mr. Peter P. Goelet. The house possesses every convenience, with an excellent large store in front. Also a negro wench, 18 years of age. She is a good cook and seamstress. Apply to Leonard Bleecker.

Peter P. Goelet died in 1828, leaving four children, Peter, Jean B., Hannah, and Robert. Hannah Goelet married Thomas R. Gerry, an officer in the United States Navy, whose father was Elbridge Gerry of Revolutionary fame and who, at the time of his death, in 1814, was Vice-President of the United States. Their son is Commodore Elbridge T. Gerry. Thomas Gerry died in 1845, and his widow survived him fifty years, dying in the old Goelet mansion on Broadway in 1895.

Peter Goelet and his younger brother, Robert, born in 1809, were not only brothers but companions in the truest sense of the word. Both died in the same year, Peter on November 21, 1879, his younger brother having preceded him by two months. Peter Goelet inherited valuable real estate holdings acquired by his father and grandfather, and he made still further additions by wise investments. His brother, Robert Goelet, was married in 1839 to Miss Sarah Ogden. Their sons were Ogden and Robert Goelet. The latter, who became a director in the Chemical Bank in 1878, was born in 1841 in the old Goelet home at 5 State Street. He was graduated from Columbia in 1860, studied law and was admitted to the bar. Early in life he showed a marked aptitude for business, and the major part of the management of the Goelet estate devolved upon him. Mr. Goelet took a keen interest in civic and public affairs of the day. Ever characterized by unostentatious demeanor, by sound judgment, and tactful methods, he exerted a beneficial influence in many directions. He was one of the original stockholders in the Metropolitan Opera House, and a director in numerous trust companies and other business organizations.

#### BRADISH JOHNSON

was born April 22, 1811, at Magnolia Plantation on the Mississippi River, about forty miles

below the city of New Orleans. William M. Johnson, his father, was a native of Nova Scotia and came to the United States in early life, becoming an eminent merchant and manufacturer in New York. In addition to his property in the city, he obtained large holdings in Louisiana, owning several plantations near New Orleans. He married Sarah Rice, a member of the leading Boston family of that name.

Bradish Johnson came North at an early age, and was graduated from Columbia College in 1831. After his graduation he went into business with his father, and on the death of the latter he entered the sugar refining business and was the first man to successfully make use of centrifugal machines for the manufacture of sugar. He was for many years a prominent figure in the business and social worlds both of New York and of New Orleans, spending a portion of every year in each city. His New York residence was at Twenty-first Street and Fifth Avenue.

At the outbreak of the Civil War he was residing at his plantation in Louisiana. In the early days of the great struggle, considerably before President Lincoln had issued the Proclamation of Emancipation, he voluntarily freed his many slaves. When the United States fleet, engaged in the capture of New Orleans, came up the river to where his plantation was, he at once raised the national flag and kept it flying as long as the war lasted.

He was one of the original directors (elected in 1844) of the Chemical Bank, and served as such for twenty years. He was also a director of several other institutions, notably the Continental Insurance Company of New York.

He married Louisa A. Lawrence, who was a granddaughter of Jonathan Lawrence, one of the most active supporters of the patriotic cause in New York during the American Revolution. In 1874 Mr. Johnson gave up active business, and after that devoted his time to the care of his real estate in New York and Louisiana, where he had large interests, which still remain in the hands of his heirs, in corporations known, in the North, as the "Estate of Bradish Johnson," and in the South as the "Bradish Johnson Company, Limited."

He died November 3, 1892. He was the father of ten children, of whom three are still living.

#### JOSEPH SAMPSON

was born in Plympton, Mass., in 1794. His ancestor Abraham Sampson joined the Plymouth colony in 1629-30. Isaac Sampson, the son of Abraham, was born in Duxbury in 1658, and married Lydia Standish, the daughter of Alexander Standish and granddaughter of Miles Standish and of John Alden, pilgrims of the *Mayflower*. The father of Joseph Sampson was the Rev. Ezra Sampson, born 1749, and a graduate of Yale Col-

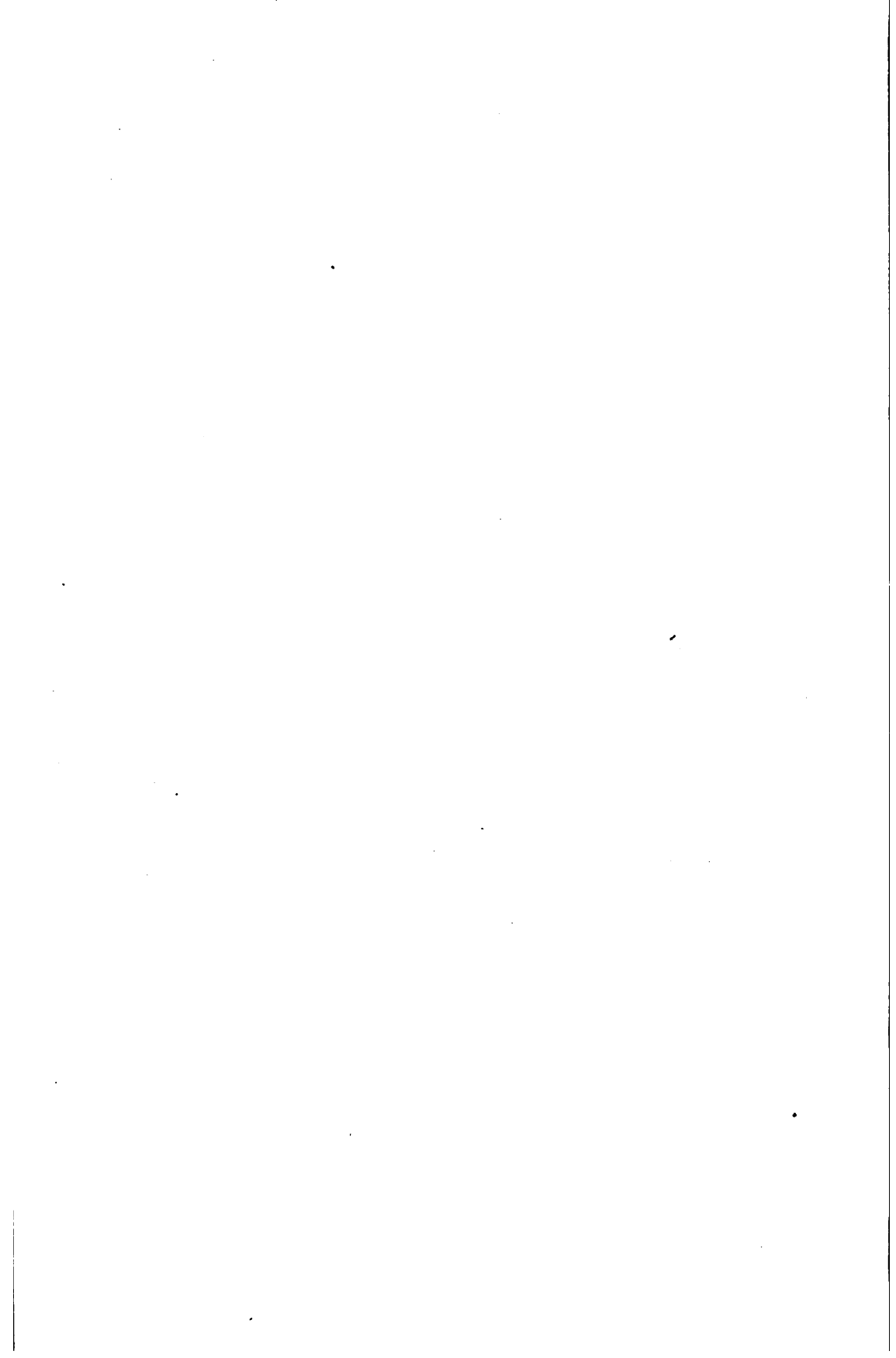


MANSION HOUSE — 39 BROADWAY



ASTOR HOUSE





lege in 1773. He acted as chaplain to a regiment of Massachusetts troops at the time of the Revolution, and was pastor of the Plympton Church twenty-one years, when he resigned from the ministry and soon after (in 1798) removed to Hudson, N. Y., then a place of considerable importance, where he with Mr. (afterward Rev. Dr.) Harry Crosswell edited a paper called *The Balance*. He was the author of several books and pamphlets, among others "The Brief Remarker," and "Beauties of the Bible," which had a considerable circulation. He died in New York, at the residence of his son, Joseph, in 1823.

Joseph Sampson came to New York when quite a lad, and with scanty means, but by his industry, intelligence, and integrity soon worked his way to the front in the firm of Boggs & Livingston, auctioneers, founded 1800-1802; next Boggs & Thompson, then Thompson & Sampson from 1820 to 1830, and Joseph Sampson & Co. from 1830 to 1847. This firm has continued to the present day, under various names. Mr. Sampson married first Adele Livingston, a daughter of Col. John W. Livingston, a partner in his old firm, and second Emily Apthorp of New Haven. He lived first in Chambers Street, not far from where the present Chemical National Bank stands, and moved in 1840 to the house built by the banker Samuel Ward, corner of Broadway and Bond Street, where he died in May, 1872. He paid \$70,000 for this property, upon which John Jacob Astor remarked

that he did not know that there was any one in New York who could afford to pay such a price for a residence. Mr. Sampson had not only the satisfaction of living in the finest of houses, but in one which increased continuously in value to the day of his death. He was one of the founders of the Chemical Bank, subscribing to one tenth of the capital stock and asking to take more, but it was not thought wise to let any one hold more than that proportion. Being a director of the Bank of Commerce, he did not serve as such in the Chemical Bank, but was always one of the leading advisers and directors of its policy, visiting it every day and consulting with its officers. He retired from business at a comparatively early age, but continued to take an active and leading part in the various companies and institutions with which he was connected as director. He was at the time of his death, in 1872, a director in the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, the Bank of Commerce, the New York Gas Light Company, and the Eagle Fire Company, in most of which, if not in all, he was the largest stockholder, as his policy was always to hold as much as possible of what he believed, after thorough examination, to be safe and permanent investments. He pursued the same course in his real estate purchases, and his wisdom has been shown by the great increase of value in his real and personal property since his death. He was remarkable for his good judgment. His clearness of

vision in business matters made his advice most valuable to those associated with him, while his even temperament prevented his losing his head in times of panic and financial trouble. During the Civil War he stood by the Government, subscribing to every issue of bonds and cheerfully paying income and other taxes with an alacrity which surprised some of his doubting associates, saying, "If the Government fails, what else is good?" He lived to see the success of the Northern cause, and peace and prosperity return to his united country.

#### THE ROOSEVELTS

Three generations of the Roosevelt family have been represented upon the directorate of the Chemical Bank, a bit of family and banking history that is as interesting as it is practically unique.

Cornelius Van Schaick Roosevelt, grandfather of the present director, W. Emlen Roosevelt, was one of the original five directors when the bank was rechartered in 1844. He was the son of James I. Roosevelt, a prominent merchant in the days when the little town on the lower end of Manhattan Island was recovering from the effects of the Revolution. James I. Roosevelt started his hardware business in 1797 at 94 Maiden Lane. The family residence was close by, at 99 Maiden Lane, and there Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt was

born, April 1, 1794. His capacity for business was honored by admittance into the firm in 1818, and during the lifetime of his father, up to 1840, the firm was known as James I. Roosevelt & Son.

In 1850 the character of the business was changed, the hardware trade giving way to the importation of plate glass, but the old Maiden Lane quarters were retained. The plate-glass business was continued by Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt and his sons until 1865, when the former retired. The family home was then on the southwest corner of Broadway and Fourteenth Street, where Mr. Roosevelt had erected one of the largest of the new uptown residences, about 1844.

Of Mr. Roosevelt's six sons, five lived to years of maturity and attained distinction in various walks of life. They were: Silas Weir, James A., Cornelius Van S., Jr., Robert B., and Theodore, the latter being the father of President Roosevelt. He died in 1878.

Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt died at his summer home, at Oyster Bay, July 17, 1871. A few years later the old Fourteenth Street and Broadway property was leased for business purposes and the family residence was torn down. The site is now occupied by the Domestic Building.

James A. Roosevelt was the second son of Cornelius V. S. Roosevelt. He was born June 13, 1825. He was associated with his father and brother Theodore for many years in the plate-glass business, but after the death of the former

he established the banking house of Roosevelt & Son at 33 Wall Street. Mr. Roosevelt was first elected a director of the Chemical Bank on April 27, 1863, succeeding his father, who resigned on account of ill health. When the elder Roosevelt returned to the Board four years later the son resigned, but within a few months, on December 21, 1867, he was elected to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Robert McCoskry. Like his father, he was unostentatious in character, devoting his time to his family, his business, and various charitable objects. The only public office he ever held was that of Park Commissioner, to which he was appointed by Mayor Strong in 1895.

Mr. Roosevelt was deeply interested in Roosevelt Hospital. He was president of the Board of Trustees for a number of years, holding that office at the time of his death. The hospital was founded through the munificence of his cousin, James H. Roosevelt, who died in 1863, leaving, in his will, practically his entire property for the purposes of the hospital. Among other interests Mr. Roosevelt was vice-president of the Bank for Savings, a director in the Greenwich Insurance Company, the Eagle Fire Insurance Company, the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, and the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company.

#### ISAAC L. PLATT

was born in Freehold, Albany County (now Greene County), N. Y., April 5, 1793. He was one

of twins. His father, Stephen Platt, died there December 12, 1800.

Isaac L., and his twin brother, Jacob S., moved to New York City. Jacob S. bought the property and cut the street in New York City which bears his name — Platt Street — in 1834.

Isaac L. Platt was one of the original directors of the Chemical Bank, from February 15, 1844, to December 11, 1844. He was vice-president of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company when this railway was put through, also director of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, and was one of the first importers of English plate glass to this country. He died October 22, 1875, at Plainfield, N. J.

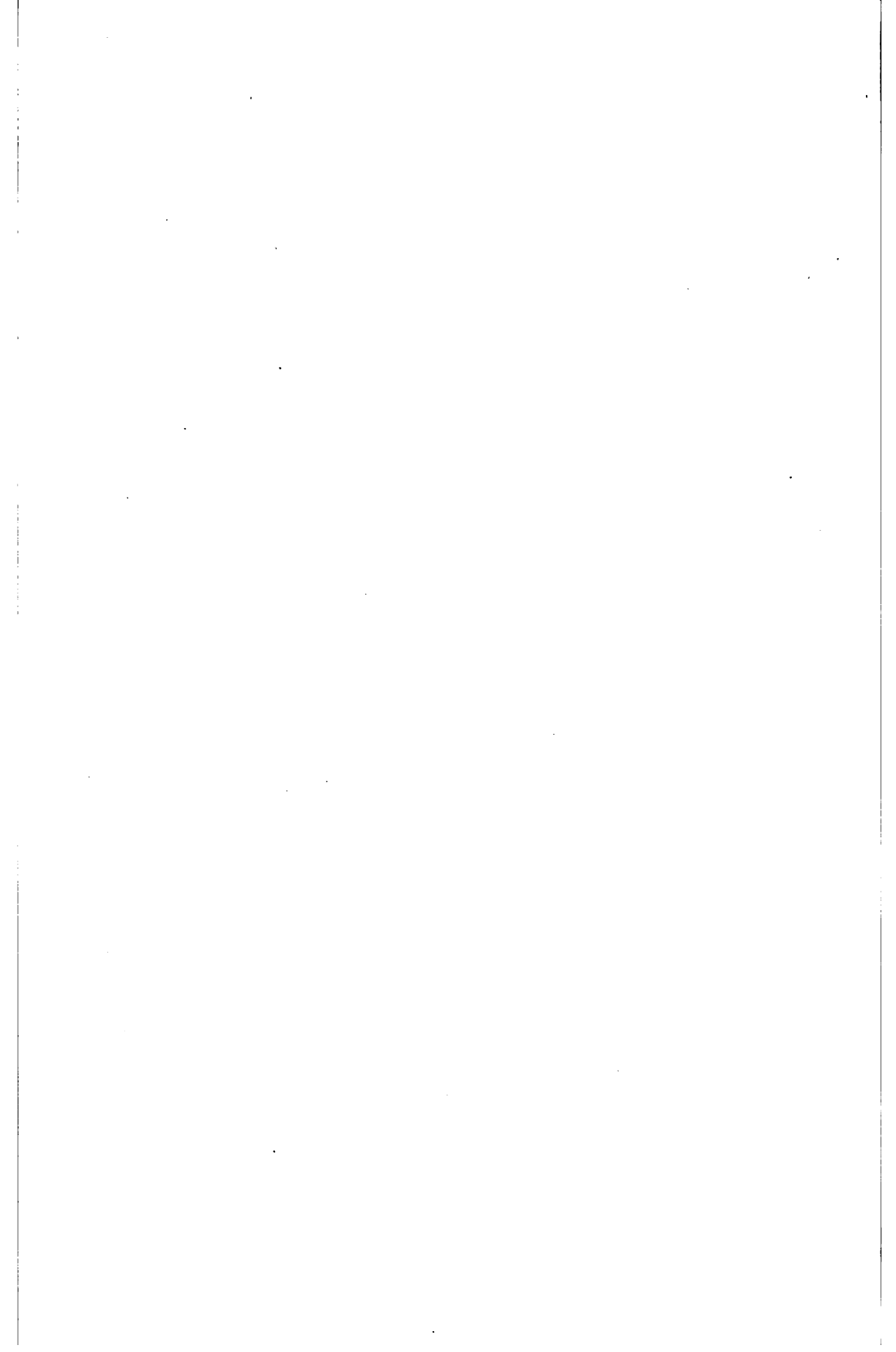
#### GEORGE G. DEWITT

who died January 12, 1912, was a director in the Bank from January 9, 1900, until his death, was born in 1845, and was graduated from Columbia College in 1867, and from the Columbia Law School in 1869. He was admitted to the New York Bar the same year, and entered the law office of his uncles, C. J. and E. DeWitt. He was a grandson of Peter DeWitt, a prominent equity lawyer in the City of New York in the early part of the nineteenth century. Peter DeWitt was graduated from Yale in 1799, and in 1803 was admitted to the New York Bar, and continued to practise as an attorney and counsellor in the City of New York until his death in 1851.

His clientage included many of the principal stockholders and depositors of the Chemical Bank in its early days, among whom were the Goelets, Wolfes, Bruces, Roosevelts, Platts, Lorillards, and other representative families of old New York. He was succeeded by his sons, C. J. and E. DeWitt, who continued the law practice established by their father down to 1872, when they were succeeded by the firm of DeWitt, Lockman & Kip, of which Mr. George G. DeWitt became a member, and which continued until 1882, when the firm name was changed to DeWitt, Lockman & DeWitt, of which Mr. DeWitt at his decease was the senior member.

At the time of his death Mr. DeWitt was the counsel and a trustee of the Greenwich Savings Bank; a trustee of the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company and the Fulton Trust Company. He was also a trustee of Columbia College, a governor of the New York Hospital, and a trustee of Roosevelt Hospital; a member of the Saint Nicholas and Holland societies, of each of which he was at one time president.





**PART III**

**SURROUNDINGS AND ORIGIN OF THE  
CHEMICAL BANK**



## CHAPTER I

### NEW YORK IN 1824

Few characteristics of metropolitan grandeur were presented by New York in 1824, the year that the Chemical Bank took its place among the financial institutions of the city. It was still a city of small homes. Of 1,600 houses erected that year, 1,298 were only two stories in height and but 720 were built of brick or stone.

Broadway was not yet recognized as the main artery of commercial life. Private homes, hotels, and fashionable boarding-houses were more numerous on that thoroughfare than shops of trade. Nathaniel Prime, one of the merchant princes, lived in the grand old mansion at 1 Broadway, which had been built long before the Revolution by Admiral Sir Peter Warren. Stephen Whitney lived at 25 Pearl Street; Robert Lenox at 59 Broadway, and John Jacob Astor lived at 223 Broadway, now occupied by the Astor House. In the rear of his house was an entrance connecting with his store in Vesey Street. One door above, at 225, lived David Lydig, and the next house, at the corner of Barclay Street, was occupied by John G. Coster. This, it is said, was the last piece of

property purchased by Mr. Astor when he was preparing to build his hotel. Mr. Coster was satisfied with his home and did not care to sell. One day Mr. Astor went to him and stated frankly that he was going to build a hotel. "I want your house," he said, "and I wish you would name two friends and I will name one. These three shall fix the value and I will add to the sum \$20,000." So generous an offer Mr. Coster could not refuse. With the money he built an elegant house at 517 Broadway, which, after his death, was turned into a Chinese Museum. These men all stood at the top of New York's wealthy class, although John Jacob Astor alone was rated as a millionaire.

The City Hotel, on the west side of Broadway, at the corner of Cedar Street, where until a few years ago the Boreel Building stood, was the leading hostelry, and there the notable visitors usually stopped. Lafayette stayed at the City Hotel on his memorable visit to America in 1824. Prominent among the more modern houses that soon came to the front were Holt's marble hotel, better known in recent years as the United States Hotel, at the corner of Pearl and Fulton streets, which was demolished some years ago; the Irving House, at Broadway and Chambers streets, and the Astor House, the latter being opened in 1836. The regular charge for room and board was \$1.50, including four meals — breakfast at eight, dinner at three, tea at six, and supper at nine. The bill of fare contained all the delicacies of the season, and was



FLY MARKET — FRONT STREET AND MAIDEN LANE. BUSINESS  
LOCALITY OF SOME OF THE BANK'S DEPOSITORS



NEW YORK HOSPITAL



served in a most ample manner. The management evidently placed great faith in the adage of caring for a man's stomach and allowing other things to adjust themselves. A peep into the inner workings of the hotel revealed the most meagre furnishings in the sleeping rooms — no carpet on the floors, a scanty supply of water, and no hot or cold baths at any price. What a contrast is presented between this, the best hotel in 1824, and the palatial caravansaries of to-day!

There were three principal markets in New York City at this time. The chief of these was the celebrated Fly Market at the foot of Maiden Lane, extending from Pearl Street to Water Street, thence to Front Street, and thence to the East River. Its first division — that lying between Pearl and Water streets — was a meat market; its second division — between Water and Front streets — was also a meat market, and its third, under a part of which the water flowed, the fish and "country" market, each market being situated in the middle of Maiden Lane. On any afternoon but that of Sunday the farmers of Long Island, especially those living on Gowanus Bay and Creek, were seen making a landing from their small boats, depositing on the wharves in the neighborhood of the market the produce of their farms, and offering it the next morning for sale on the sidewalks of Maiden Lane between Front Street and the river.

In addition to Trinity and St. Paul's, fortunately still to be seen in their accustomed places,



Grace Church was one of the prominent Broadway houses of worship. The church then stood on the Rector Street corner opposite Trinity, where now towers the Empire Building. Its name for many years of being the most fashionable church in the city was due, in a great measure, to the genial character of its rector, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan M. Wainwright, combined with his eloquence as a pulpit orator and after-dinner speaker. An English visitor, who called upon Doctor Wainwright while the old-fashioned custom of New Year's day calls was still in vogue, says:

I found him attired in full canonicals, with a table displaying a profusion of wine and cake, and busied in conversing and shaking hands with his parishioners.

Although Broadway was tacitly considered to extend to Tenth Street, the real life of the city ceased at the hospital occupying the whole block on the west side of Broadway, between Duane and Worth streets, which, with its spacious grounds and magnificent trees, held out bravely against the encroachments of business until 1869, when it was forced to join the uptown procession.

On nearly all of the side streets branching off from Broadway there were handsome residences. Greenwich Street from the Battery to Cortlandt Street was a desirable locality. Fashion and learning flashed about the vicinity of Columbia College, whose campus, flanked by sedate, scholarly looking

buildings and shaded by great elms and plane trees, was bounded by College Place, Murray, Barclay, and Church streets.

The main business thoroughfare was Pearl Street, where were to be found the big wholesale houses. South Street was the headquarters of the shipping merchants and importers, and Front and Water streets were occupied by wholesale grocers, iron dealers, and commission merchants. The desertion of Pearl Street in favor of Broadway went on unceasingly during the second quarter of the century. In 1851, when the homelike features of lower Broadway had virtually become eliminated, a writer in the *Commercial Advertiser* cited the windmill in the city's coat-of-arms as —

Strongly typical of that idiosyncrasy of change which appears to be characteristic, not only of New York citizens, but of the city itself.

The expression has lost none of its force to-day. He adds:

We notice that Messrs. Betts, Sellick & Betts, the senior partner of whom has kept his carpet warehouse in Pearl Street near Chatham Street for more than a quarter of a century, have announced their intention to move to Deforest's beautiful store in Broadway, opposite the Irving House. We must admit that the new locality is much better for their business, yet we feel mortified that so inveterate a conservative as Mr. Betts cannot successfully resist this predominant spirit of change.

Although lower Broadway and some of the more important streets were well paved and kept fairly clean, the general condition of the city's streets was not such as is demanded to-day. Swine roamed about at will and grew fat upon what they found in the streets. The presence of sleek-looking hogs in certain views of old New York is no idle or artistic fancy. A visitor from abroad in 1829 speaks of swine roaming at large, while ashes and rubbish were thrown into the middle of the streets. A few years later another traveler describes the streets next to the river as "narrow, dirty, and adorned by large fat swine."

Postage was an expensive luxury and so was traveling, for there were no railroads. Although Fulton had demonstrated the success of steam navigation on the Hudson River in 1807, comparatively few steamboats were in use. It cost 6 cents to send a letter thirty miles, 10 cents up to eighty miles, and 25 cents to a point four hundred miles or over. The post-office employed six letter carriers. When it moved into the basement of the Merchants' Exchange it had a staff of twenty-five employees.

The post-office remained in the Merchants' Exchange until that building was burned in the great fire of 1835. It was one of the few buildings of which the citizens always spoke with conscious pride. It was completed in 1827, and had a frontage of 115 feet on Wall Street, standing where the custom house was, and where the City Bank

is now located. It was constructed of white Westchester marble with grand Ionic columns in front, the general design being taken from a temple of Minerva in Ionia. Gideon Tucker, who later became one of the directors of the Chemical Bank, was the builder. On the main floor was the large exchange room, and here the merchants, particularly those engaged in shipping and importing, met for a daily interchange of trade talk. The Chamber of Commerce had rooms on the second floor.

**SWIFTSURE TRANSPORTATION LINE****Steam Tow Boat Company.****Between New-York and Philadelphia, via Delaware and Raritan Canal.***For the conveyance of Merchandise, Goods, Baggage, &c., &c.; and Insurance effected whenever required, on any Package, to its full amount at rates.*

On the roof was a station to which the arrival of vessels was signaled from Sandy Hook by means of flags.

The fast route to Philadelphia was by the Union Line, which, by means of steamboats from New York to New Brunswick, then by stage to Trenton, and from there by steamboat to Philadelphia, made the trip in one day. A special boat left the Battery at six o'clock in the morning, and its passengers reached Philadelphia the same after-

noon, paying, however, for this excessive speed a fare of \$4, one dollar more than the all-day trip. Peculiar interest is attached to this Union Line, because Cornelius Vanderbilt was, for a time, captain of one of the steamboats plying between the Battery and New Brunswick.

Bowling Green, the Battery, and City Hall Park, the latter then including all the ground now covered by the post-office, were the only parks worthy of the name. St. John's Square, opposite St. John's Chapel, might be included in this list, but its use was limited to the residents of that fashionable locality. Fashion, as well as the little park, have long since gone. Now the big freight depot of the New York Central Railroad occupies the site.

City Hall Park was known simply as "the park." It was the scene of every important celebration from the early Revolutionary days when the Sons of Liberty defended their liberty pole from the attacks of the loyalists. Although the city has spread with giant strides above it, the historic spot has by no means lost its prestige as the scene of civic festivities. Two of the greatest celebrations ever held there occurred immediately after the organization of the Chemical Bank. One was in the same year, when the city paid a royal tribute to General Lafayette, and the other was in 1825, to commemorate the completion of the Erie Canal.

The visit of Lafayette, close upon the eve of the

fiftieth anniversary of American Independence, was a notable event. As he journeyed from one town and city to another, revisiting battlefields where he could claim the merit of having played an active part, he was everywhere received, not only with outward manifestations of welcome, but with those deeper sentiments of the heart which attested the sincere love of the people. Lafayette arrived in New York Harbor on Sunday, August 15th. The following day he landed at Castle Garden. His ride up Broadway was one continuous ovation. It is not unreasonable to suppose that B. P. Melick, with the other officers and employees of the Chemical Bank, saw the distinguished guest as he passed the Bank building at 216 Broadway. It is said that General Lafayette was so affected at the warmth of his reception that, upon arriving at the City Hall, he was forced to rest for several moments to overcome his emotion before addressing the people. He was then sixty-seven years old.

The Erie Canal celebration was preceded by an event unusual even in the uncertainties of New York political history. This was the removal by the legislature, in less than two weeks after granting the charter to the Chemical Bank, of De Witt Clinton as Canal Commissioner. To the unceasing efforts of De Witt Clinton, more than to any other man, was due the success of the canal. "Clinton's big ditch" was the term derisively applied by his political enemies. For fourteen

years he had been a member of the Canal Board, drawing no salary. Now, when the great work was practically finished, he was removed. The deed proved a veritable boomerang. Indignation meetings were held all over the state and one was called in the park. In the fall of 1824 Clinton was elected Governor by a larger majority than had been given to any previous candidate. He had been Governor for the first time in 1817, when the canal was started.

The celebration began at Buffalo on October 26, 1825. A splendid canal boat, the *Seneca Chief*, having Governor Clinton and other notables on board, was towed from one end of the canal to the other. The boat arrived in New York on November 4th. There was an elaborate naval parade, followed by a monster land parade. Governor Clinton was escorted to the City Hall, and in the evening the building was illuminated as it had never been before. Charles King, when president of Columbia College, said, in referring to this event:

I know it is common to speak of each celebration in turn as the finest, but I, who have witnessed a great many fine pageants here and elsewhere, have never seen one which, in all its effects and moral considerations and actual display on land and water, equaled the Canal Jubilee of November 4, 1825.

Of the buildings in the park at that time the

City Hall alone remains. It furnished ample accommodations for the Mayor, Recorder, Street Commissioner, Surrogate, Sheriff, Grand Jury, Health Commissioner, Police Headquarters, the District, Mayor's and Superior Courts, their clerks and other officials. On the right of the City Hall, to the east, was the Debtors' Prison, where a few delinquents were still incarcerated. As the Hall of Records, this building, that had once served as a prison for American soldiers, was well known up to early in 1903, when it had to join the departed landmarks. West of the City Hall was the Bridewell, or city prison. This was torn down in 1833.

Near the centre of the upper end of the park, where the court house is now, stood the New York Institute, originally the almshouse. In 1816 a larger house for the city's poor was erected in the Bellevue Hospital grounds. The New York Institute was for years the headquarters of various societies, and the fact that it afforded room for many that to-day possess elaborate homes of their own illustrates the infancy of the city in many respects at that time. It was the home of Scudder's American Museum, the Academy of Fine Arts, the Lyceum of Natural History, the New York Historical Society, the Bible Society, the Deaf and Dumb Institute, the Savings Bank, and the Military Society, while John Griscom, principal of the high school erected in 1825 in Crosby Street, between Grand and Broome, gave lectures



in one of the rooms on chemistry and natural philosophy.

The city fathers and overworked clerks, however, had entertainment of a more spectacular nature close at hand. In the rotunda were being exhibited panorama of the battle of Waterloo, the palace and gardens of Versailles, and other scenes. This interesting building, circular in form and surmounted by a dome, fronted on Chambers Street, a little to the east of the New York Institute. It was erected in 1818 by John Vanderlyn, one of America's early artists.

There was plenty of amusement in the city. The famous Park Theatre still maintained its ascendancy, although it was no longer the only home of legitimate drama in New York. It was really the second Park Theatre, for the original building was burned in 1820. Theatre Alley, in its rear, is still reminiscent of its palmy days. Henry Placide first appeared on the Park stage in 1823 in his popular character of Zekiel Home-spun in "The Heir At Law." Italian opera was heard there for the first time in New York in 1825, under the auspices of Signor Garcia and his celebrated daughter, who later became Madame Malibran. Other popular favorites in those early years were Henry Wallack, Edmund Kean, James H. Hackett and Mrs. Hackett, Edwin Forrest, Charles Macready, Charles and Fanny Kemble, who came here in 1832; the Wheatley family,

James Wallack, Tyrone Power, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wood, and Mlle. Celeste.

In 1825 the Lafayette Theatre in Laurens Street, near Canal, was opened. The stage was the largest in the country. Notwithstanding its elaborate appointments, the house was too far from the centre of the city to pay well. It was finally destroyed by fire in 1829.

Beyond the city proper were a number of summer gardens, all providing light entertainment. The Vauxhall Gardens, at the head of the Bowery; the Cold Spring Gardens and Richmond Hill Theatre, in Greenwich Village, the latter famous as Aaron Burr's early residence, were among the most popular. The Vauxhall Gardens were famous in New York from pre-Revolutionary days, but about 1805 they were established in their most familiar home, south of Eighth Street and between the Bowery and Broadway. Lafayette Place, when cut through in 1826, divided the Gardens, and the fame of Vauxhall declined. Mrs. Lydia Maria Child visited them in 1844, and says:

There are some notable old trees at Vauxhall which rustle right pleasantly in the breeze. Colored lamps arranged in stars and circles light up the shrubbery with a faint glimmer, and harmonies come down from a band of musicians among the boughs. I love to sit on one of the rustic benches and gaze up into the foliage of the tall trees, like the dome of a dimly lighted cathedral.

The Cold Spring Gardens, so called from the never-failing supply of cool water from a spring, overlooked the Hudson River in the vicinity of Washington and Leroy streets. The famous Richmond Hill house, with its once luxuriant gardens, was opened as a theatre in 1831, but underwent frequent changes in management and name. Mrs. Adams, in some of her charming letters, has pictured the rural beauty of the place when it was occupied by Vice-President John Adams in 1789.

Besides these out-of-town resorts, there were other gardens, equally popular, within the immediate precincts of the city, Contoit's New York Gardens, on the west side of Broadway, between Leonard and Franklin streets, being a particularly favorite resort. William Niblo opened the Sans Souci Gardens, later known as Niblo's, in 1826. On Chatham Street, now Park Row, between Pearl and Duane streets, was a little place of amusement known as the Chatham Garden. In 1823 a pavilion theatre was erected there by the proprietor, Henry Barriers. Admission was 25 cents. The method of securing reserved seats is thus explained in his opening advertisement:

Families desirous of securing places will please send their servants with their card of address and the number of seats to be secured, at the time of opening the doors; the servants will be permitted to retain possession of the seats for their masters till the end of the first act, after which



CONTOIT'S GARDEN — 1830



BROADWAY AND GRAND STREET — 1840



on no account will they be suffered to remain in the Garden.

Lovers of the circus could see wonderful feats of horsemanship in a large wooden building on the east side of Broadway, between Grand and Howard streets.

Rapid transit, as defined to-day, was unknown. Business men, as a rule, lived within easy walking distance of their offices, and many of the larger tradesmen as well as the smaller shopkeepers lived in the buildings in which they had their stores. The big, lumbering stages did not become a necessity until a few years later, and not until 1832 was heard the merry tinkle of the horse-car bell. Even then, when there was some opposition to the laying of car tracks in the Bowery, John Mason, in its defence, asserted that not more than seventy stages were likely to suffer by the possible transfer of freight to the railroad. Private stages from Niblo's, Vauxhall, and other outlying resorts were run into the city for the accommodation of patrons on special occasions.

The two main thoroughfares out of town were the Eastern Post Road, by which name the New York end of the old Boston Post Road was known, and the Bloomingdale Road. The former ran to Harlem and beyond, following in a more or less circuitous route the present line of Third Avenue, while the latter ran to Manhattanville, the western part of Harlem, Kingsbridge and more dis-

tant points. Houston Street, then called North Street, was practically the northern boundary of the city. Some idea of its appearance in 1823 may be had from the following advertisement in the *Commercial Advertiser* of April 4th:

To Let. The two-story brick house situated at the corner of the First Avenue, corner of North and Allen streets, with about an acre and a half of ground laid out as a garden with a great variety of excellent fruit, a well of good water, stable, etc. The house is handsomely furnished and replete with every convenience for a genteel family.

First Avenue was opened as far north as Bellevue Hospital. Second Avenue ran to Kip's Bay, above Thirty-fourth Street, where the grand old Kip House was standing, surrounded by fertile fields. This survivor of Dutch days was built in 1655, and, just as it completed its second century, was leveled to the ground to permit the cutting through of Thirty-fifth Street.

Yorkville was a small village chiefly known as the summer resort of wealthy merchants, who built grand old homesteads, surrounded with broad piazzas, on the high embankment overlooking the Harlem River from Fifty-ninth to Ninetieth Street. John Jacob Astor, Nathaniel Prime, Archibald Gracie, the Schermerhorn, Jones, and Provost families had country seats there. With the exception of the Archibald Gracie house, now preserved in the East River Park, the Nathaniel Prime house, hidden from sight by the walls of a

large orphan asylum, and the stone house built for Col. William Stephens Smith in 1799, in Sixty-first Street near First Avenue, practically every vestige of these fashionable residences, together with the natural beauties of the place, has disappeared. Even the grand old trees that were the pride of Jones's Wood have gone. Hundreds of men, still young in years, can recall the sports and other amusements which used to make the name of Jones's Wood a synonym for festive gayety.

The rural beauty of the spot caused it to be proposed for a public park in 1851, but the plans were soon modified in favor of Central Park.

The Street Commissioners in 1807 set apart a small plot of ground between Sixty-sixth and Sixty-ninth streets, between Fifth and Third avenues, to be known as Hamilton Square. This little square, since obliterated, is interesting as being the site of the first Yorkville church, St. James' Episcopal, now at Madison Avenue and Seventy-first Street. In the early days it was more commonly called the Hamilton Square Church. It stood on the southwest corner of Lexington Avenue and Sixty-ninth Street, and was a plain wooden building, completed and consecrated in 1810 by Bishop Benjamin Moore. Trinity Parish assisted it liberally. John Mason was one of the organizers of this church; his name appears among the first vestrymen, while Joshua Jones and Isaac Jones were two of the three inspectors of election.



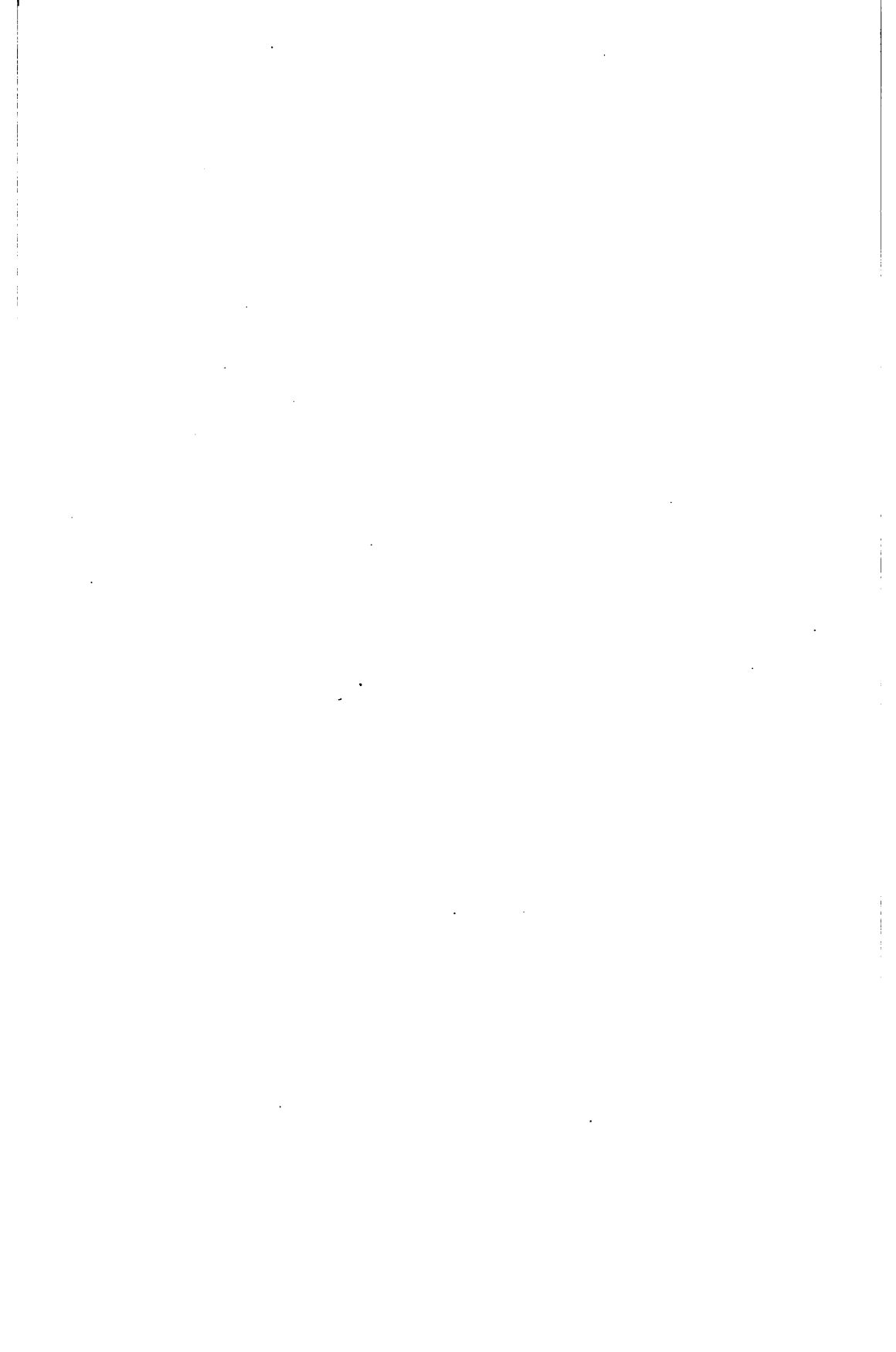
Washington Square ceased to be a potter's field in 1825, when the public burying ground was removed to the fields between Fifth and Sixth avenues, Thirty-ninth and Forty-third streets. Bryant Park is now a remnant of this field. Madison Square, much larger than at present, was the parade ground. Just above Twenty-third Street and overlooking Fifth Avenue, then familiarly called the Middle Road, was the House of Refuge, opened in 1825. The buildings had originally been used as a Government arsenal, and were surrounded by a high stone wall. In 1828 a New York guide-book states that "the Broadway coach will take passengers for  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents to within a short distance of the place, about two miles from City Hall." The State prison from 1796 to 1825 was in the village of Greenwich overlooking the Hudson. The penitentiary, in addition to the almshouse, was in the Bellevue Hospital grounds in the far east side of the city.

Nine newspapers furnished information to the inhabitants, but the news was not so thoroughly up to date as is necessary for metropolitan journalism to-day. European news depended upon the speed of the fast-sailing packet ships. Notices like the following, which appeared in a New York paper of April 17, 1824, were frequent:

By arrival of the brig *Duxbury*, Captain Drew, at Boston, we have received, in addition to proof sheets from our correspondents at that place, the *London Globe* and *Traveller* of the sixth of March.



VIEW OF CHEMICAL MFG. CO.'S WORKS, THIRTIETH STREET AND TENTH AVENUE, FROM HOBOKEN



Then follows a full page of foreign intelligence taken from these six weeks old papers. The news did not always arrive so rapidly, as is seen by this statement of December 2, 1831:

It is now fifty-two days since our last advices left the shores of Europe, an unusually long period for our ships to linger on the main.

William Cullen Bryant, who had already acquired enviable reputation as a poet, assumed the editorship of the New York *Evening Post* in 1828, and William L. Stone was editor of the *Commercial Advertiser*. The literary life of the period was by no means crude. Among the popular writers were Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Fitz Greene Halleck, James K. Paulding, Gulian C. Verplanck, N. P. Willis, Lewis Gaylord Clark, and George P. Morris.

New York in 1824 was a delightful little city, full of business and social activity; although they lacked many of the benefits of modern-day progress, there is no indication that the citizens were less happy amid surroundings which the twentieth century critic may sometimes smile at as provincial and old fashioned.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

The establishment of the Chemical Bank, as observed in Part I of this volume, followed upon the incorporation, at Albany, February 24, 1823, of "The New York Chemical Manufacturing Company without Banking Privileges." The aims were to be the manufacturing of "blue vitriol, alum, oil of vitriol, aquafortis, nitric acid, muriatic acid, alcohol, tartar emetic, refined camphor, saltpetre, borax, copperas, corrosive sublimate, calomel, and other drugs, medicines, paints, and dyers' colors."

John C. Morrison, James Jenkins, and Charles G. Haines were appointed commissioners to receive subscriptions to the capital stock. Under the amended charter granting general banking privileges, in 1824, Gerardus Post was substituted in place of Charles G. Haines. The capital, \$500,000, remained unchanged, but it was specified that \$100,000 must be employed in the manufacture of chemicals. The autograph receipt of Balthazar P. Melick, first president of the company, also of the Bank, acknowledging \$50,000 received from the commissioners, being

10 per cent. on the capital stock, is still in possession of the Bank. It is dated June 15, 1824.

Soon after its incorporation the company purchased the chemical and drug factory in Greenwich Village owned by John C. Morrison. It occupied the southwest corner of Hudson and Gansevoort streets, the latter street in the early records being known as the Great Kill Road. The price paid was \$37,219. This plot of land had a frontage of 88 feet 9 inches on the west side of Hudson Street and 62 feet 3 inches on the south side of Gansevoort Street.

John C. Morrison was one of the prime organizers of the company. He was a director and acted as agent of the company until 1832. He was evidently the practical chemist in the concern. For years he was one of the largest wholesale druggists in the city, his store being at 186 and 188 Greenwich Street, between Vesey and Fulton streets.

In 1825 the company abandoned its Greenwich Village property and moved uptown, purchasing, during 1825 to 1827, a large plot of land on the Hudson River between Thirty-second and Thirty-fourth streets, and running back to Tenth Avenue. While it does not appear that any further use was made of the old property, it was retained until 1834, when it was sold to George W. Tucker, a hardware merchant of 87 Chatham Street, for \$6,000. The wide difference between the selling price and the much larger sum paid for the prop-

erty is evidently due to the value of the factory, the contents of which had been moved, as far as possible, to the new headquarters.

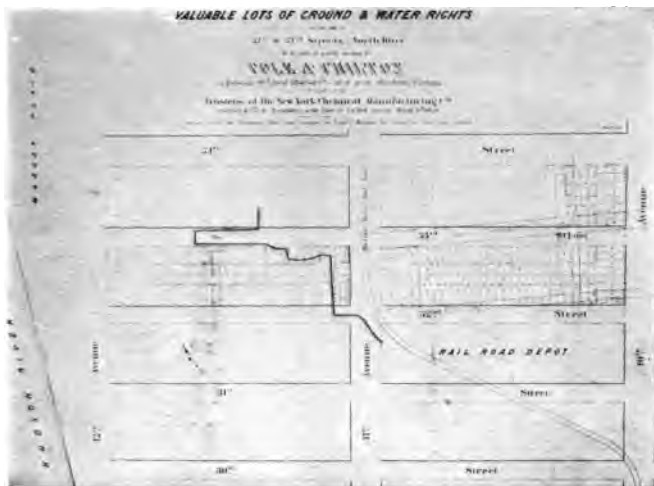
The new home of the Chemical Manufacturing Company was a portion of the old Rem Rapelje farm, which originally extended from Thirtieth to Fortieth Street, Eighth Avenue and the river. The Rapelje family is famous in the Dutch annals of New York from the fact that the first child of white parents born in the little city of New Amsterdam was of that family. The child was named Sarah de Rapelje. Rem Rapelje purchased his New York farm shortly after the Revolution. It was then far out of town; neighbors were scarcer than they are to-day in many farming districts of New England.

Several years before Rem Rapelje began to cultivate his fields an attempt had been made to manufacture glass bottles on the property, and a small wooden house was erected for the purpose. The project did not succeed, but the name clung to the place for years. When the Chemical Manufacturing Company moved there the locality was still known as the "Glass House Farm." Among the real estate advertisements in the *New York Gazette* early in 1813 is the following:

TO LET — That part of the old Glass House Farm adjoining the Greenwich Road, situated about three miles from the town and containing about 35 acres. An excellent situation for a milk man. Inquire of A. L. Stewart, 225 Broadway.



FARM HOUSE OF RAPELJE PROPERTY, AFTERWARD FACTORY  
OF CHEMICAL MFG. CO.



MAP OF NEW YORK CHEMICAL MFG. CO'S. PROPERTY  
THIRTIETH STREET AND TENTH AVENUE





Previous to the Revolution the Glass House Farm was a portion of the large estate of the English admiral, Sir Peter Warren, whose magnificent summer home overlooked the Hudson in the old Chelsea Village section. The old Rapelje farmhouse, typical of the simplicity of the early Dutch farming days, stood unmolested for many years, even amid the encroachments of city life, near the foot of Thirty-fifth Street, overlooking the river. It was torn down in 1865.

Another real estate advertisement of much interest as showing the relative value of the property in the vicinity of Thirty-fourth Street eighty years ago, when viewed in the light of the important terminal improvements which have been made there by the Pennsylvania Railroad, is found in a New York newspaper of February 1, 1832. James Bleecker & Sons gave notice of a sale about to be held of twenty-two lots, each 25 by 100 feet, on Tenth Avenue:

Opposite the Chemical Factory, bounded by 32d, 33d and 34th streets. It is as fine a situation for a country seat as any on this Island, commanding a fine view of the North River, etc. It is now enclosed with a good fence. On the premises is a well of good water, stable and a number of good fruit trees.

The Manufacturing Company was still active up to 1832. Among the papers of the old company still in possession of the Bank is a small

order book, and although the entries are not as numerous as would be looked for in a concern whose first aim was to manufacture and sell chemicals, it nevertheless shows that the leading druggists of the city were included among the customers. Among them are found the following names, and many of the firms are still prominent in the trade of to-day—i.e., Colgate & Bros., 10 Gold Street; Seth Low & Co., 115 Maiden Lane; Howland Keese & Co., 80 Maiden Lane; P. G. Acularius & Co.; Olcott & McKesson; Rushton & Aspinwall; Robinson & Cornell; A. Tieman & Co.; Rudyard & Whittlesley; I. & I. F. Tripp; Pentz & Co.; H. M. Schieffelin & Co., 88 Maiden Lane, who ordered on June 18th, “20½ barrels alum in bulk, 10 kegs do., 50 pounds each, 1 load oil vitriol, 1 barrel blue vitriol”; Hoadley Phelps & Co., 142 Water Street, ordered “7 carboys oil vitriol to-morrow”; Jeffries & Catterfield bought of the trustees of the New York Chemical Manufacturing Company, 55 cases crude brimstone for \$876.46.

There was also considerable out-of-town business with New England, New Orleans, and other points. For example, Benedict & Co. “want by the first boat for New Haven, 14 large carboys oil vitriol and 1 barrel crude borax.” H. Seymour of Hartford orders “7 carboys oil vitriol by the *Merchant*, this afternoon; lays at Burling Slip”; Miles J. Fletcher, “by Sloop *Victory* Thursday morning”; Lodi Print Works “by schooner for Hack-

ensack"; J. & W. Williams of Utica "by the Troy tow boat"; W.W. & C. Laflin "want by sloop, Coenties Slip"; Hopkinson & Ward "first packet"; Francis Phillippon, *Natchez*, "for New Orleans, Pier 18 or 19."

There were about half a dozen frame buildings on the Chemical Manufacturing Company's property which were for the manufacture of different chemicals. When, in 1844, the Manufacturing Company, by the provisions of its charter, ceased to exist, these houses were no longer used for their original purposes, although the trustees kept an office in one of them until the affairs of the company were settled in 1850. A record of a lease is extant of a frame dwelling in Thirty-third Street, to Boving & Witte, commission merchants, "except the basement, as an office, and also the frame buildings in the rear on Thirty-second Street, known as the Aqua Fortis, Muriatic, and Borax houses." The yearly rental was \$200. In 1849 two of the houses were used as grocery stores, and the six buildings were insured for \$3,200.

Besides these buildings, the company had made other improvements. In June, 1832, the Board of Aldermen granted permission to the company to erect a stone wall between high and low water mark, bounding the river front of the property, and in 1838 a pier forty feet wide was built at the foot of Thirty-third Street. Tenth Avenue had been macadamized shortly before, and this pier was built of the surplus stone.

From the assessments made upon the property from time to time it is easy to note the steady march of city improvements. In 1826 the company was assessed \$1,190 for opening Thirty-second Street. In 1846, \$200.78 was paid for opening Eleventh Avenue above Thirty-second Street; in 1848, for regulating and setting the curb and gutters in Tenth Avenue and Twenty-eighth to Fortieth Street, the company paid \$528.62, while in 1847 the curious entry appears of \$63.25 being paid "for a well and pump lately placed in Thirty-third Street between Ninth and Tenth avenues."

A special bill had to be passed at Albany authorizing the sale of the property. It was signed by Governor Hamilton Fish on March 9, 1850. The notice of the sale, published in several of the daily newspapers early in April, was:

By Cole & Chilton, 9 Wall Street, corner New. Peremptory sale, 12 o'clock, April 10, at Merchants' Exchange, of valuable lots of ground and water right at foot of Thirty-second Street, North River. Sold by order of Trustees of the New York Chemical Manufacturing Company. 16 lots on west side of Tenth Avenue, comprising whole front of blocks from 32nd to 34th Steets; 48 lots in block bounded by 10th and 11th Avenues, 32nd and 33rd Streets; 9 lots on 33rd and 34th Streets, commencing 100 feet west of Tenth Avenue; 8 lots on east side of 11th Avenue, between 33rd and 34th Streets, the whole front of block; 64 lots, entire block bounded by 11th and 12th Avenues,

32nd and 33rd Streets, included in which is water right extending to the line of the 12th Avenue; 4 lots on northwest corner of 34th Street and 10th Avenue; 2 lots in Brooklyn; undivided half lot in Newark, southeast corner of Harrison Street and Maiden Lane.

The terms of purchase were 10 per cent. and auctioneers' fees on the day of sale; 30 per cent. on delivery of the deeds, and 60 per cent. on bond and mortgage for three years at 6 per cent.

The entire property brought \$110,370. It was a notable sale and attracted wide attention in real estate circles. There were over twenty purchasers, the heaviest buyer being John D. Wolfe, who bought the entire block of sixty-four lots, with its water rights, bounded by Eleventh and Twelfth avenues, Thirty-second and Thirty-third streets, for \$30,500. He also bought nine other lots, paying \$2,800 apiece for the corner lots on the west side of Eleventh Avenue and Thirty-third Street and Eleventh Avenue and Thirty-second Street respectively. For his entire purchases Mr. Wolfe paid \$47,900.

Bradish Johnson bought nine lots; H. R. Dunham, seven lots, and Bernard McKenzie, nine lots.

The prices obtained were highly satisfactory, although several lots sold for less than \$400 apiece. The taxes on the property were \$345.46 in 1849, on an assessed valuation of \$35,000.

Between 1844 and 1851 two payments on the stock held by the shareholders of the Manufactur-

ing Company were made, amounting to a total of \$26.60 on each share, the par value being \$25. The first payment was \$20 in 1844, and resulted in the paying off of a total of \$400,000 on the original capital stock of 20,000 shares. In 1851 the final payment of \$6.60 was made, giving a total of \$132,000. The trustees at the time of the payment of this final installment, which was the closing act in the existence of the New York Chemical Manufacturing Company, were: Isaac Jones, George Jones, William T. McCoun, A. Gordon Hamersley, Moses Tucker, and George B. Gilbert. The seventh trustee in 1844 had been Gideon Tucker, but he had died in the interval.

The office of the New York Chemical Manufacturing Company was at 17 Park Place in March, 1847, and at 4 Park Place in March, 1850.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BANK'S FIRST HOME — 216 BROADWAY

From a private home to a banking house, from a banking house to a museum, from a museum to the publication offices of the New York *Herald*, and then to another banking house and the towering St. Paul Building — such have been the transformations of the historic Broadway and Ann Street corner since the year 1824, when the Chemical Bank chose the little red-brick building at 216 Broadway, one door below the corner, for its first home.

The site on which the Chemical Bank's first home stood possesses an interesting history. The property in early Dutch days was one of the outlying city farms, known as the Shoemakers' Pasture, but it was sometimes called Tienhoven's Plantation. It contained sixteen acres east of Broadway, extending from Maiden Lane to Ann Street, and was owned by five shoemakers and tanners. John Street commemorates one of the members, named in honor of John Harpending, who came to New York in 1660 and plied his shoemaker's trade on Broadway near Maiden Lane until the time of his death, in 1723. He



left a comfortable fortune, a large part of which he bequeathed to the Dutch Reformed Church.

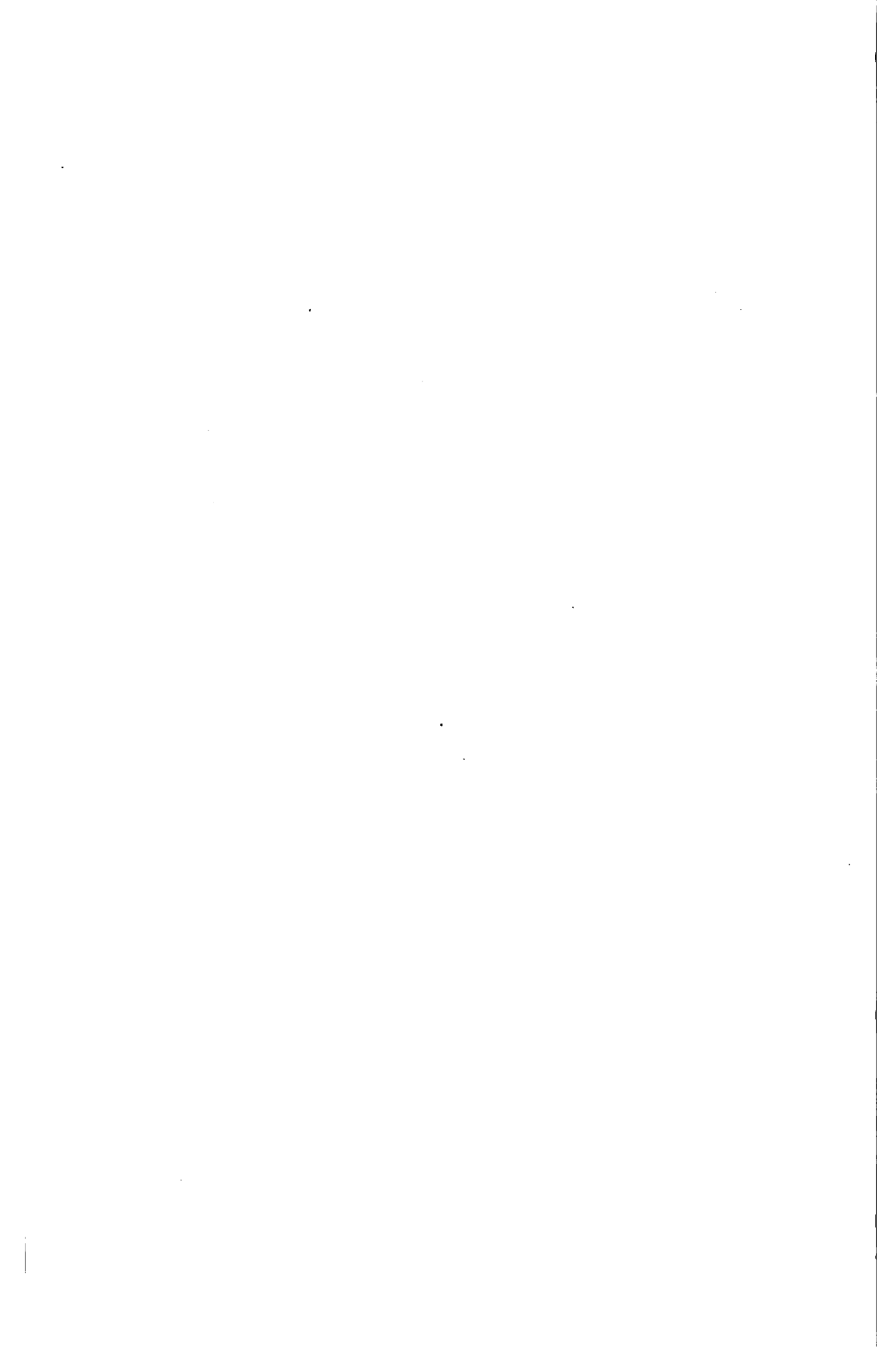
In 1715 the old Shoemakers' farm was cut up into 164 building lots, and the increased value of the land made all the members of the Shoemakers' Association rich.

Previous to the Revolution a popular resort known as the Spring Garden afforded entertainment to the convivial spirits of the town. In 1760 the place was kept by John Elkin, whose quaint advertisements announce that he "serves breakfast from 7 to 9, tea in the afternoon from 3 to 6, and keeps on hand a plentiful supply of pies and tarts."

Ten years later the Sons of Liberty bought the tavern. Under its new name, Hampden Hall, it occupies a prominent place in the Revolutionary annals of the city. With the tavern, a small plot of ground was purchased in the Fields, now the City Hall Park. There Isaac Sears and his band of "Liberty Boys" erected their fourth liberty pole. Three poles had been cut down by the British soldiery, the last occasion arousing such a hostile demonstration on the part of the young patriots that the soldiers and populace met in actual warfare on January 18, 1770, in what has since been dignified by the name of the Battle of Golden Hill. Its chief merit to fame lies in the fact that it marked the first bloodshed in the Revolution. A tablet on the northwest corner



BARNUM'S MUSEUM — 1866



of John and William streets marks the site of this encounter.

The first big celebration in the new home of the Sons of Liberty took place on March 19, 1770. An indication of its character is given in the following notice from Holt's New York *Journal* of March 8th:

This is to give notice that the house so purchased is the corner house on the Broadway near Liberty Pole, lately kept by Mr. Edward Smith. And all Sons of Liberty, without discrimination, who choose to commemorate that glorious day, are requested to attend at the said house on the nineteenth day of March next. Dinner will be served up at Two of the Clock.

It is interesting to record that in many of the committee meetings of the Sons of Liberty were men whose descendants in later years were actively identified with the fortunes of the Chemical Bank. Peter Goelet, for instance, appears on the Committee of Fifty-one, appointed in May, 1774, to correspond with the neighboring colonies "on this present important crisis." Isaac Roosevelt was chosen on April 16, 1776, to represent the city in the Provincial Congress. Among other New York merchants associated with Peter Goelet on the Committee of Fifty-one were John Alsop, William Bayard, John Jay, Theophylact Bache, afterward president of the Chamber of Commerce; Nicholas Hoffman, Henry Remsen, James Duane, Gerardus W. Beekman, Peter Van

Schaick, William Walton, Philip Livingston, Elias Desbrosses, Alexander McDougal, and Leonard Lispenard.

The Broadway and Ann Street corner may, almost reverently, be called sacred to the memory of Phineas T. Barnum. For nearly twenty-five years, from 1841 until July 13, 1865, the fame which the corner enjoyed as Barnum's Museum was national. For about ten years previous to the appearance of Barnum it was the headquarters of the old American or Scudder's Museum. John Scudder, who is said to have begun life as an organ grinder, founded this museum in 1810. It was originally located in the New York Institute, the old building in the rear of the City Hall. About 1832 it moved to the Ann Street corner, occupying the greater part of a new building known as the "Marble Building" from the fact that the Broadway front was finished in light marble.

Poor management, combined with small additions to its stock of wonders, brought Scudder's Museum to the verge of ruin. On December, 26, 1841, the entire collection was bought by Mr. Barnum. Though he had practically no capital, by his own confidence and the aid of generous friends he more than repaid their faith in him. Even to-day the name of Barnum has not lost its suggestive charm of the circus, with the attendant collection of human dwarfs, giants and fat people.

Under Barnum's skilful management the mu-

seum grew rapidly. He was never excelled in ability to secure remarkable specimens, human and otherwise. He understood to a nicety the art of exciting the curiosity of the public, so that a visit to Barnum's became an actual necessity to one's peace of mind. The museum was filled with a large number of curiosities and relics of deep historical interest, but they were all destroyed when the building was burned in 1865.

In 1850, on the Chemical Bank's move to its present Broadway site, Mr. Barnum leased the adjoining buildings to enlarge his museum. In making the necessary changes, the collapse of the upper floors of the building lately occupied by the Chemical Bank nearly caused a tragedy. The *Evening Post*, in its issue of Monday, April 29, 1850, described the accident:

This morning, about 10 o'clock, the building known as the site of the old Chemical Bank, but recently purchased by Barnum with the view of adding it to his museum establishment, and therefore undergoing alterations and repairs, fell to the ground. Some workmen, employed on the third story, had cut away the rafters very imprudently, as it turns out, and before the arrival of the foreman, thereby weakening the building so much that the floor fell under the weight of those standing upon it. The second and first stories were carried along with it down to the very basement. There were some forty persons at work in the house who were nearly all buried in the falling plaster and bricks, but fortunately most of them were got

out. Only one man was killed on the spot and two others are supposed to be embedded in the ruins. The wonder is that every man in the building was not killed or mangled.

Mr. Trimble, the architect, when he was told of the accident, fell into a fit, and was carried next door into Genin's hat shop, where he received attendance and was revived.

The building belonged to the Arden Estate and not to the Chemical Bank, who had no interest in it whatever, their lease of the premises having expired last week, when they removed.

Fortunately, the accident turned out to be less serious than the quickly written account would imply. It was found that no one was killed, though nine laborers were carried to the New York Hospital for treatment. Hospital methods were not as perfect as to-day, so one of the lumbering Broadway stages had to be impressed into service as a temporary ambulance. The driver, who at first refused to carry the injured men, was soon brought to a change of mind by the police and angry spectators.

While Barnum was enlarging his museum he was planning the more ambitious project of bringing to this country Jenny Lind, the sweet-voiced Swedish singer, for a series of concerts. Her first appearance under Barnum's management was in Castle Garden, September 11, 1850. The tickets for the opening concert were sold at auction and the price of \$225, unprecedented up to that time, was paid for first choice. John N. Genin, New York's



270 BROADWAY — 1848



RESIDENCE OF A. T. STEWART  
FIFTH AVENUE AND THIRTY-FOURTH STREET





celebrated hatter, whose store adjoined the old Chemical Bank Building at 214 Broadway, was the purchaser. It was afterward said by his friends that the money he paid for the first Jenny Lind ticket was the cheapest advertising he ever did in his life. The great panic of 1857 numbered Genin among its victims. Jenny Lind's share from her first concert was \$10,000, which she gave to charity, the sum being divided among twelve institutions in the city.

The historic museum and several adjoining buildings were destroyed by fire on July 13, 1865, whereupon James Gordon Bennett paid Barnum \$200,000 for the showman's eleven years' lease of the property, and a little later paid \$500,000 for the Ann Street corner, on which he erected the *Herald* building. In 1866 the Park Bank paid \$350,000 for the Chemical Bank's old site, 216 Broadway.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BANK'S SECOND HOME — 270 BROADWAY

When the Chemical Bank, instead of joining its friends in the financial section around Wall Street, moved in 1850 still farther uptown, the step was considered bold and almost hazardous. As the first bank on Broadway, the Chemical had demonstrated the success of its faith in the business prosperity of that thoroughfare and now, in putting up the first building that had ever been erected purely for banking purposes on Broadway, a more positive demonstration was given of belief in the future of Broadway as a great commercial centre. It is significant, however, of the general recognition accorded to Wall Street as the financial centre that in April, 1853, the president was authorized to hire a room at 60 Wall Street for the use of the directors; the rent was \$200 a year. This room was evidently retained only for one year, since no further mention of it appears.

The plot of ground at 270 Broadway, one door below the Chambers Street corner, upon which the new building was erected, had a frontage of 25 feet and was 92 feet deep. It was acquired on May 2, 1849, from Robert Goelet. Originally

the land had formed a part of the historic church farm owned by the Corporation of Trinity Church. How much less it cost to build a house half a century ago may be figured from the bank records of July 6, 1849, ordering that there should be paid for the mason work of the new building the sum of \$8,750. It was an unpretentious edifice, three stories high, with a brownstone front. Practically the only attempt at its ornamentation was the words "Chemical Bank," cut in the stone over the door. This stone is now in the vestibule of the new Bank building. The first meeting of the directors was held in their new home on April 10, 1850. There may have been some personal satisfaction in the fact that their building towered above all its neighbors in the block. This unconscious pride in exterior appearance could only have been maintained for a short time. Indeed long before it was demolished the Chemical Bank had run to the other extreme and was the smallest building in that locality. It had reached, however, the dignity of a landmark. Of all the buildings in the vicinity, with the exception of the City Hall and the Astor House, three blocks below, it was the oldest.

The New York directories tell us that Christian Couenhoven kept a small shoe store at 270 Broadway from 1809 to 1817, and that at 271 Broadway was a small green grocery.

A few years previous to 1850, hotels and, later, business houses had crowded out the private res-

idences that used to overlook the park. In 1850 Broadway opposite the park presented an unbroken business line. A view of this interesting section in *Gleason's Pictorial* for March, 1851, enables us to recall the names of the tradesmen on the west side of Broadway, and also gives us the exact appearance of these business blocks. Adjoining the Chemical Bank on the north was Tiffany's, then known as Tiffany, Young & Ellis, with the sign over the door, "Jewelry and Fancy Goods." On the other side of Chambers Street was the popular Irving House, for many years a rival of the Astor House as the fashionable hotel of the city. The lower part of the hotel was occupied by stores, among them being Goupil & Co., the Chickering Piano Warerooms, and the china store of Ebenezer Collamore. Delmonico at one time had his restaurant on this corner.

The block south of the Chemical Bank was occupied by a row of small stores and daguerreotype galleries. In the block between Murray and Warren streets was the popular book store of Charles S. Francis, and the carpet warehouse of Smith, Knapp & Co., now Shepherd, Knapp & Co. In the block below, at 245, was the carpet store of W. & J. Sloane, and at 247, on the Murray Street corner, was the jewelry store of Ball, Black & Co., an enormous eagle surmounting the top of the building.

To-day, the only building in the locality (except the City Hall), which still retains the



CHEMICAL NATIONAL BANK — 1896



appearance of half a century ago, is the Astor House.

Opposite the Irving House, where the Stewart Building now stands, was the famous dry goods store of Alexander T. Stewart. He was a close friend of the founders of the Chemical Bank, a stockholder in 1844, and also one of its large depositors. His new store, lately completed, excited the admiration of citizens and visitors alike. Says a New York guide-book for 1853:

Beyond the City Hall and on the line with Broadway we discover a building of snowy marble, whose size and beauty render it a conspicuous object. This is Stewart's marble palace, probably the most costly building in the world owned and occupied by one merchant.

The necessity for more room to accommodate the Chemical's business needs was so clearly recognized during the Centennial year that in 1879 the Bank purchased the building at 76 Chambers Street, and in 1887 added that at 78. The old houses were torn down to make room for a bank annex connected with the main Broadway building, thus affording a large, well-lighted room facing on Chambers Street.

Time was moving very fast, however, and the Bank soon outgrew this arrangement. First, having justified the establishment of a bank on Broadway, the growth of New York and the increase in the Chemical's business made it necessary



to move to a new site, then made an enlargement of this site necessary, and finally in January, 1905, it was decided to put a new building on the old site at 270 Broadway.

The quarters that in 1887 had seemed ample for all future growth had become too cramped and inconvenient for the satisfactory conduct of the Bank's business. Moreover, the front and rear buildings did not agree in style or arrangement and the directors felt that the Chemical Bank should have a home that would be a credit to its reputation, and a building that would be a permanent addition to the architectural beauty of New York. Consequently the bank removed to temporary quarters in the Barclay Building, 303 Broadway, on May 22, 1905, and occupied its new building on April 22, 1907.

However, before the dignified white stone building of the Chemical became a landmark on Broadway, the important ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone took place, on July 12, 1906. In accordance with the custom of placing documents in the cornerstones of institutions, a copper box containing papers, records, coin, and bills was embedded in the west wall of the vestibule of the new building behind a large brownstone block. The block, which was taken from the front of the old building on the same site at 270 Broadway, bears the inscription, "Chemical Bank," which looked down on the Broadway crowds for so many years.



MAIN ENTRANCE OF PRESENT BUILDING





VIEW FROM CHAMBERS STREET



The contents of the box behind that historic stone are as follows:

- One copy of New York *Evening Express*, March 13, 1858.
- One copy of New York *Herald*, March 14, 1858.
- One copy of New York *Times*, June 27, 1906, referring to change in law as to amount which national banks can loan.
- Copies of newspapers of July 9th and 10th, 1906.
- Copy of statement of this Bank, June 18, 1906.
- Copy of Clearing House constitution and last report.
- Copy of original report of the Committee on Establishing the Clearing House, together with their rules and suggestions.
- Copy of supplementary rules and regulations covering the making of the exchanges.
- Copy of original letter from the committee relating to the rules and regulations of the Clearing House, October 3, 1853.
- Copy of original list of banks in Clearing House, 1853.
- List of all officers of the Bank, from 1824 to date.
- List of clerks from the year 1849 to date.
- Specimen bills of Chemical Manufacturing Company and Chemical Bank.
- Specimens of old checks, certificates of deposit, etc.
- Specimens of legal tender notes, silver certificates, and national bank notes. Specimen coin of the year 1906.
- Sundry stationery and forms in present use.
- Estimated cost of new building.
- Estimated cost of cash vault.
- Names of architects and contractors.
- Two insurance policies and two bills for advertising in connection with Chemical Manufacturing Company.
- Keys of safes used in old building and padlock and key from oak chest used for storing bullion.
- Views of the east and west sides of Broadway to Fifty-ninth Street, published by the *Mail and Express* in 1898.
- Photographic copy of Becker's picture of the Bank building, sketched about 1854.
- Photograph of Bank building taken in 1905.
- Outline of history of the Bank.

When the great new building, designed by Trowbridge & Livingston, New York, was completed in May, 1907, the public and press of New York

showed no lack of appreciation of its architectural beauty. Among the newspaper accounts of the building, published at the time, was the following:

"The new building which is one of the finest in the United States, has a façade of gray granite with tall columns, occupying 'the space on Broadway formerly covered by the old building.

"The vestibule is finished in Pavonazzo marble and the corridor in white-veined statuary marble. The great pillars of the central banking room are of green Chippolino marble, and the walls and floor also are marble. Eighty-five feet above the floor is the dome of heavy glass from which a golden light makes bright the big room. On the pendentives below the dome are four allegorical figures, Ceres, Boreas, Helios and Neptune, typifying the elements Earth, Air, Fire and Water, and suggesting the name of the Bank.

"The banking room, which is 70 feet wide by about 100 feet long, abutting on Chambers Street, is finished in panels of veined white marble relieved by Chippolino marble of an olive tint.

"In a four-story section of the building which rises over part of the corridor well back from the Broadway entrance are the Directors' Room, and dining-rooms for both officers and employees, where luncheon is served.

"One of the most interesting features of the new building is the vault, which is unlike any other in the city. This is built on a gore of land about 25 feet square, extending south from the banking room. On this, a masonry structure has been built up to the level of the first windows of the banking room.

"Here the 150-ton safe stands supported, in



THE LOBBY





BANKING ROOM



VAULT OF PRESENT BUILDING



effect, in midair. It is about 18 feet deep, 20 feet wide, 24 feet high and divided into two stories. Standing on masonry columns, it allows room for the watchman to pass beneath, and a further protection is afforded by mirrors set at the rear corner so that the watchman standing in front of the vault can see the space behind it.

"It also has an equal space between its top and ceiling of its house, which is in plain view of the banking room.

"The outer door is 14 inches thick, exclusive of the bolt work, locking mechanism, etc., and 21 inches in thickness including bolt work; weighs twelve tons, and is constructed of drill-proof chrome steel.

"The inner door is  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches in thickness (9 inches including bolt work mechanism) and is constructed similar to the outer door. The doors are carried on steel crane hinges with antifriction bearings so sensitive that a child could close them."

And so the building of the Chemical National Bank stands to-day a permanent tribute to more than ninety years of solid, conservative banking, and a monument to the men who made its history one that can be set down here with pride.

Not only is the great building an inspiration, but also it is a token of a sacred trust held in reverence and in full appreciation of the responsibilities entailed in maintaining the record of those bankers of bygone days who made the name Chemical Bank synonymous with safe and conservative finance.

While the preceding pages are "history," it by no means follows that the management and administration of the past fifteen years have been relying entirely on the work of their predecessors, for in spite of the keen competition in banking circles the Chemical Bank has continued to hold an enviable position in the business world, and its deposits have varied comparatively little during that time, while the surplus and undivided profits have materially increased. It is interesting, therefore, to call attention to what some might consider "sentiment," but which was evidenced in a very strong manner by *acts* during the panic of 1907, when the average deposits greatly increased. When the panic was at its worst a large number of people came to the Bank without any introduction to open accounts, aggregating many millions of dollars, and when asked the reason therefor, said they had *always* known the "Chemical," or that they had been advised by some of the depositors, or other friends, that their money would be perfectly safe, which showed the confidence of the public and that the name "Chemical" meant strength in time of fear and anxiety.

That good business has always had a strong undertone of sentiment was often commented upon by Mr. Williams, and in line with this statement it is perhaps worth while to copy a few paragraphs from a letter written by a New York merchant who has long been a customer of the Chemical Bank:



CLOCK ORIGINALLY IN POSSESSION OF CHEMICAL MFG. CO.



"When I started in business I made up my mind to go to what I had always thought of as the best and strongest bank in New York, but I had grave doubts as to whether such a big institution would consider such a small business man a desirable depositor.

"With timidity I took a letter of introduction to Mr. Williams from a friend who vouched for my honesty, the greatness of my ambition, and the limited extent of my capital. To my surprise, the President received me with genuine interest and cordiality. He asked me many searching questions in a kindly and courteous way which I felt was flattering rather than the reverse, and finally said that it would be a pleasure to have my account. On leaving, he took my hand and remarked in his quiet and kindly way: 'This Bank has been built up by such young men as you who have come to us when their beginnings were small and remained with us when their affairs grew large. I have no doubt you will be a valued customer and help build up our institution.'

"The effect of this interview was magical upon me and I became obsessed with the idea that I must live up to the hope expressed by Mr. Williams. My greatest ambition was to stand well with the Chemical, both because it had encouraged and believed in me, and because I realized that it *always had the means to back its judgment in times of stress*. For many years I never made an important financial move without consulting Mr. Williams, and later his successors, and I am still trying to stand well with the Chemical."

This story, which could be duplicated many times, proves the close relationship between the Bank and its customers.



After reading the story of the Bank's progress, with its consistent revelations of old-fashioned conservatism, steadiness, and adherence to precedent, one might imagine that the Chemical is a bank where only the money kings of the nation keep their gold and that its doors are closed to the ordinary citizen. That it numbers among its depositors so many of the wealthiest and best known individuals and estates of America might seem, at first glance, to indicate that this is the case, but the facts are utterly at variance with this theory. The business of the Bank being so diversified in its character, it naturally numbers among its depositors all classes of business interests, from the very rich to the man of moderate means; and it has always been its policy and pleasure to accord identical treatment to all of its customers and to keep in close touch with the men who are the real business builders in our community. Character is the most essential attribute that a business man can possess, and any merchant or manufacturer who has this asset and whose statement shows a satisfactory condition of affairs, can obtain the coöperation of this old bank, the motto of which has always been "Be strong."

# OFFICERS OF CHEMICAL BANK

## PRESIDENTS

BALTHAZAR P. MELICK	APRIL 1, 1824
JOHN MASON	APRIL 4, 1831
ISAAC JONES	OCT. 1, 1839
JOHN QUENTIN JONES	JAN. 30, 1844
GEORGE G. WILLIAMS	JAN. 2, 1878
WILLIAM H. PORTER	MAY 11, 1903
JOSEPH B. MARTINDALE	DEC. 28, 1910
JAMES A. ROOSEVELT, ACTING PRESIDENT	JUNE 27, 1887

## VICE-PRESIDENTS

CORNELIUS V. S. ROOSEVELT	JUNE 2, 1848
JAMES A. ROOSEVELT	MAY 12, 1890
WILLIAM H. PORTER	JAN. 2, 1899
JOSEPH B. MARTINDALE	JAN. 9, 1907
HERBERT K. TWITCHELL	JAN. 10, 1911
JACOB C. PARSONS, SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT	FEB. 2, 1898

## CASHIERS

WILLIAM STEBBINS	APRIL 1, 1824
ALANSON DOUGLAS	OCT. 11, 1828
ARCHIBALD CRAIG	JAN. 2, 1830
JOHN Q. JONES	OCT. 1, 1839
JOHN B. DESDOITY	FEB. 15, 1844
GEORGE G. WILLIAMS	DEC. 13, 1855
WILLIAM J. QUINLAN, JR.	JAN. 2, 1878
FRANCIS HALPIN	FEB. 2, 1898

## ASSISTANT CASHIERS

WILLIAM STEBBINS	OCT. 11, 1828
WILLIAM J. QUINLAN, JR.	DEC. 23, 1874
CHARLES E. RYDER	MAY 18, 1881
JAMES I. BARR	MAR. 21, 1883
FRANCIS HALPIN	MAR. 16, 1892
JAMES L. PARSON	FEB. 16, 1898
JOSEPH B. MARTINDALE	DEC. 24, 1902
HERBERT K. TWITCHELL	JAN. 9, 1907
EDWARD H. SMITH	JAN. 9, 1907

# DIRECTORS OF CHEMICAL BANK

	ELECTED
ISAAC L. PLATT	JAN. 30, 1844
C. V. S. ROOSEVELT	JAN. 30, 1844
BRADISH JOHNSON	JAN. 30, 1844
JOHN D. WOLFE	JAN. 30, 1844
JOHN QUENTIN JONES	JAN. 30, 1844
ROBERT MC COSKRY	DEC. 11, 1844
GEORGE G. WILLIAMS	MAR. 21, 1864
JAMES A. ROOSEVELT	DEC. 21, 1867
JOHN H. ADAM	JAN. 13, 1869
FREDERIC W. STEVENS	JAN. 11, 1871
ROBERT L. KENNEDY	JAN. 7, 1873
ROBERT GOELET	JAN. 8, 1878
OGDEN GOELET	APRIL 18, 1882
JOSHUA JONES	SEPT. 28, 1887
WILLIAM J. QUINLAN, JR.	DEC. 19, 1888
W. EMLÉN ROOSEVELT	JAN. 31, 1898
AUGUSTUS D. JUILLIARD	OCT. 3, 1898
WILLIAM H. PORTER	JAN. 10, 1899
GEORGE G. DEWITT	JAN. 9, 1900
ROBERT WALTON GOELET	JAN. 14, 1902
JOSEPH B. MARTINDALE	JAN. 9, 1907
HENRY P. DAVISON	JAN. 11, 1910
CHARLES CHENEY	JAN. 9, 1912
HERBERT K. TWITCHELL	NOV. 13, 1912

## PRICE OF STOCK

1860	425	1890	4,785
1875	1,500	1895	4,900
1884	2,271	1901	4,155
1885	2,518	1906	4,325
1887	2,805	* 1907	425
1888	4,007	1910	450
1889	4,500	1912	450

\*Capital Stock increased from \$300,000 to \$3,000,000 February 28th, 1907, by dividend from surplus.

### DIVIDENDS

### SURPLUS

1849	12%	1829	\$ 4,000
1855	18%	1839	75,000
1856	24%	1849	225,000
1866	36%	1859	650,000
1870	40%	1869	1,000,000
1871	60%	1890	6,000,000
1873	100%	1906	7,000,000
1888	150%	** 1907	5,000,000
** 1907	15%	1912	6,000,000

\*\$2,000,000 from Surplus Fund and \$700,000 from Undivided Profits added to Capital.

# STATEMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE CHEMICAL NATIONAL BANK

AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JUNE 4TH, 1913

HISTORY OF THE CHEMICAL BANK

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ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Loans and discounts . . . .	\$25,929,462.26	Capital Stock . . . . .	\$3,000,000.00
U. S. bonds to secure circulation .	300,000.00	Surplus Fund . . . . .	6,000,000.00
U. S. bonds to secure deposits .	150,000.00	Total Capital and Surplus . . . .	\$9,000,000.00
Bonds, securities, etc. . . . .	1,270,702.29	Undivided profits . . . . .	1,410,432.64
Banking-house . . . . .	1,000,000.00	National bank notes outstanding .	284,900.00
Due from banks . . . . .	2,190,833.63	State bank notes outstanding . .	10,838.00
Exchanges for clearing-house, etc.	2,812,093.56	Reserved for Taxes <small>(ISSUED PREVIOUS TO 1863)</small> . . . .	43,346.69
Due from U. S. Treasurer . . .	59,000.00	Deposits, viz.:	
Five per cent. redemption fund .	15,000.00	Individuals, firms	
Cash on hand:—		and corporations \$23,351,411.70	
Specie . . . . \$4,276,328.80		Banks, bankers and	
Legal tender notes 2,150,000.00		trust companies 6,051,014.41	
		United States	
		(U. S. Marshal) . . . 1,477.10	
	<u>6,426,328.80</u>		<u>29,403,903.21</u>
	<u>\$40,153,420.54</u>		<u>\$40,153,420.54</u>



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